THE TWO CAPTAINS

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THE TWO CAPTAINS

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THE TWO CAPTAINS

A ROMANCE OF BONAPARTE AND NELSON

BY

CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY

AUTHOR OF "THE SOUTHERNERS," "A LITTLE TRAITOR TO THE SOUTH," "THE CORNER IN COFFEE," "FOR THE FREEDOM OF THE SEA," "A DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY," ETC., ETC.

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PREFACE

I

A CONFESSION

Yes, gentle reader, if you have given the matter a thought, — being a reader I assume that you are thoughtful, — you have divined that this is an HISTORICAL NOVEL.[1] If you belong to that unfortunate class which takes no delight in that ancient and honorable, and to me fascinating, — to say nothing of its usefulness — form of romance, lay the book aside, commend yourself for the lofty conception you cherish as to what real high-class fiction should be, and which you will not permit to be contaminated or vitiated by contact with a mere story or romance like this, and go on your red-bloodless way rejoicing, ignorant of what you miss, and therefore — by all the canons of ancient aphorism — happy.

II

AN ADMISSION

To those who deign to persevere after this fair warning, I will admit that there is just as much history in this romance as I could get in it, and that the history in it is just as accurate and faithful as much study and

[1] I caused this to be printed large to catch your eye. Let there be no deceit between us. I want you to see this before you buy, so that you may know just what you are purchasing.

reflection on my part could make it. Nor will it lack interest on that account, I am confident. The two captains, about whom the story revolves, were beyond peradventure the two supremely greatest men in their chosen fields of action that the world has ever seen. Although the casual have not realized it, they were in active opposition until the death of one of them; and in two instances the brilliant ability of the one absolutely brought to naught the majestic plans of the other.

The story culminates in one of the great crucial moments of modern history. Had the result of the battle described — and how I have loved and do love to dwell upon it — been other than it was, who shall say how would have been altered the course of history? To speculate on the probable consequences to mankind of the successful working out of the plan of the one captain, which the other frustrated, is to grow giddy in contemplating the magnitude of the possibilities.

Like "Vanity Fair," — alas, the only point of likeness between them, I mournfully admit, — this is a novel without a hero. Not that Captain Macartney, whom I think a most engaging and attractive young sailor, lacks elements of the heroic in his character and in his action; yet how could there be any other hero when both Bonaparte and Nelson are on the stage? Also the reader who likes these things, and few, thank God, are the crabbed who do not, will find hereafter a pretty love story enough.

As for the rest, my admiration is divided between the silent Brébœuf and the gallant old marquis — a fine figure he makes fighting at last for France. Eliminating the two great captains, perhaps the rugged Breton sailor is after all the true hero of this veracious tale. By actual count he speaks less than a score of words in the whole book, — I forestall the witty one who says, "For this relief, much thanks," — but these words are always to the point. You will like Brébœuf I am sure. But the reader can choose his own hero; there is abundant material to follow from which to select. There is only one heroine, however. To introduce two of the latter in a novel would be to commit intellectual polygamy — which God forbid.

III

A PROTEST

Now the mere putting forth of a book of whatsoever sort is in a certain sense a challenge. Criticism is invited by publication. Books generally are not published from altruistic motives alone by that hardly used and wretchedly abused class of men who are popularly believed to exist solely for the support of authors. Books are for sale, and of every honorable and legitimate thing that makes for the sale the publisher is fain to avail himself. There is some doubt as to the value of reviews. Time was when books were killed or made by reviews. Those were the days when people largely thought by proxy. Now we have

so many books — sweet are the uses of the "literary deluge" — that they have at least taught people to think for themselves, and the importance of the review is now an open question. Personally, of all my books, the one that received the longest and most favorable reviews from the best papers, and which was oftenest quoted, not to say "cribbed," is the book that has sold the fewest number of copies. However, since the publishers send out between two and three hundred copies gratuitously to book reviewers, it is evident to which side of the question their own opinion inclines.

Critics, the noble name by which we describe overworked — or should I not say overwhelmed? — modern book reviewers, are among the few people who read prefaces. I do book reviewing myself frequently, therefore I speak by the card. It may save the critic the necessity of reading the book. Therefore I confidently expect that what is here set down will fall under the critic's eye. (Observe I do not say the critical eye.) I write this for him. Let him praise the book. Let him damn it if he will. Let him ignore it if silence be to his fancy. *But whether it be praise or blame, let him accord it on the merits or demerits of the book and on nothing else.*

It uses much valuable space, it wearies the reader, as it certainly wearies the author, and it is quite unnecessary, to have the critic discourse in trenchant phrases on the number of books I write, or my prolificacy, or literary fecundity, or anything of that sort. They may be suitable subjects for consideration or dis-

cussion elsewhere, — though I myself think not — but they are entirely foreign to the purpose of a book review. This novel may seem hastily or carelessly written, — it isn't. It may appear ill-digested, unstudied, — it wasn't. Whether the work accords with these denials or not, I cannot tell. I can only speak of purpose and of method. I took all the time I wanted for composition and revision. Nobody hurried me. Whether this is a solitary book or one of a dozen has nothing to do with the question before the critic, which is, is it good or is it bad?

This novel represents the best I could do at the time I did it. I never wrote a thing that I did not wish to write, — I could not. It would be worthless if I should. Generally the thing that I am writing is not only the thing that I wish to write, but usually it presents itself to me as the thing above all others that I most enthusiastically desire to write at that particular time. I will confess that I rarely complete a thing without a secret consciousness — alas, too often dispelled, and that without the aid of critics — that it is the best thing that I have ever done. I have made this remark to different publishers, and have been informed by them that every other author thinks his latest his best.

So, if you please, forget my personality and what I have or have not done — sins of commission and omission, — and let the book stand or fall by its own inherent qualities — good, bad, or indifferent, as the case may be, — never minding me at all. We have too

much personal gossip about authors anyway, and I, for one, am sick of it.

This preface has run to an unpardonable length, perhaps. Even the overworked critic seeking to save himself the reading of the romance is probably surfeited by now. For myself, I could write a volume. Indeed, if there were no other excuse for writing novels than that they should enable the author to perpetrate prefaces, I should be happy to write the novels. I have the unlimited preface habit undoubtedly. Imagine, therefore, gentle reader, — or possibly by this time you are ungentle, — what constraint I put upon myself by refusing to allow myself to keep you any longer from the pages that follow, if now you have the hardihood to essay them.

CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY.

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Book I

ON THE ROCKS OF PROVENCE

CHAPTER I

THE MARQUIS AND THE PEASANT

THE marquis stepped daintily through the narrow wicket cut in the great door facing the sea, circled the tower to its landward side, walked a few yards from its wall, traced a short line in the ground with his cane, withdrew a short distance, and waited.

From where he stood he could overlook the disorderly camp of the besiegers, just out of gunshot at the head of the valley. Back of the camp the landscape rose in rugged hills which lost themselves on the far horizon in distant mountains. Gleams of light reflected from their lofty crests gave evidence that they were snow-capped. A little rivulet came brawling down the valley, passed the camp, plunged through a rocky crevasse, splashing noisily as it fell some twenty feet below the marquis where he stood with his back to the tower, and spread shallow on the shining sands at the foot of the cliffs until it merged itself softly into the rippling seas.

It was a magnificent prospect extended before the eyes of the marquis, but as he had seen it off and on at intervals many times during his sixty odd years of life, it did not attract his attention, which was concentrated upon the camp and upon a man approaching

him. The marquis invariably preferred men to scenery —and, for all his age, women to either! The man clambering up the rocky eminence toward the marquis carried a bit of white cloth in his hand, which he waved with much ostentation as he drew near.

There was a great contrast between the man and the marquis. The latter was dressed in the very height of a fashion that had passed, the former in the anticipation of one that was coming. Nothing had been so thoroughly revolutionized by the revolution in France as the fashion. Frequently it requires no less than a revolution to alter a fashion, or the habit of one. "Other times, other clothes," was a Republican maxim. The marquis and the man were cases in point.

The cocked hat of the noble was perched jauntily upon his bewigged head. His uniform coat was of blue satin faced with scarlet and laced with gold. Orders and decorations blazed on his breast. His small-clothes and stockings were white. Diamond buckles set off his red-heeled shoes. Costly lace spread from the lapels of his waistcoat, or drooped over his white, aristocratic hands, one of which clasped lightly the jewelled hilt of a slender sword hanging at his side. In the other hand the marquis carried the light cane with which he had made the line in the ground.

Standing there in the sunlight of that autumn morning, against the dark background of the gloomy half-ruined tower, the marquis glittered like a sun. Once, so far as the eye could see, the marquis had been lord paramount of the domain. Now his holdings were

reduced to that fallen tower; his riches to the jewels which flashed on his person; his family to a boy and girl, his grandchildren; his vassals to a man and a woman.

The man approaching was a tall, burly, rough-looking person, with a sinister cast of countenance, which was not without some evidence of courage and force, although utterly devoid of any kind of breeding or of kindness. There was an unwonted sense of power and command about him which gave him a decided air of arrogance. Yet there was a certain uneasiness about him, too; assurance without an assured foundation in fact. He met the marquis' eye boldly, but only by constraint.

He was clad in a coarse, ill-fitting, long-skirted, uniform coat of blue and red, with white trousers and black gaiters. From a belt over his shoulders depended a formidable ship's cutlass. Another belt around his waist carried a brace of huge pistols. On his head, in place of a hat, he wore a kind of knitted cap, — a liberty cap it was called.

Peasant was writ large all over him, — but peasant free! Unfortunately, his liberty had blossomed, as liberty often did, into excess.

The marquis was a small man, and the newcomer overtowered him by a head and shoulders. As he drew near, his pace slackened perceptibly, and he lost an increasing amount of the confidence, not to say swagger, with which he had started from the camp. He hesitated, uncertain as to how far to adventure,

and finally stopped. The marquis, who had been surveying him with a mixture of amusement and contempt, broke the silence.

"You can come nearer, Jean Garron," he said loftily. "There! Plant your feet on that line."

In spite of himself the man moved forward to the place indicated. The marquis' voice was clear, cold, and, like himself, exquisitely polished and clean cut. What he said was in the nature of a command, and although he was no match physically for the man to whom he spoke, he was obeyed as it were automatically. Indeed, for a moment the man's hand half rose to his bonnet.

"Yes, Monsieur le—" He recovered himself just in time. "Citizen Vaudémont," he said harshly.

"Pardon," said the marquis, "you will address me as you started out or our conference terminates immediately."

"The Republic," growled the man, savagely, "has abolished all titles, cit—"

"Not that!" interrupted the older man.

"Oh, as you will," answered the other with affected carelessness; "there are none to hear anyway, and where no one knows there is no harm in breaking the law."

"That doubtless is a convenient code of conduct for Jean Garron, but you did not ask this parley to give me your views upon ethical questions, I infer, and as I do not wish to hold any further conversation with you than is necessary, you would better state your business, if you have any, and retire."

The manner of the marquis was intensely aggravating. Swallowing his wrath as best he could, Garron began.

"Yonder are my forces. There are two hundred brave *sans culottes*, patriotic, liberty-loving citizens of the Republic — "

"I have observed those worthy citizens," interrupted the marquis, caustically.

"I have received word from General Carteaux that Admiral St. Julien has sent me a battalion of marines with a field-piece. I am a captain in the navy of the Republic, cit — Monsieur l'Amiral — "

"The Republic must be in desperate straits to make you a captain, monsieur."

"You can call me 'citizen,' " growled Garron, "'tis the order of the Republic."

"I shall call you anything I want, Garron," returned the marquis, contemptuously. "You a captain! You on the quarter-deck! You are not fit to take charge of a cock-boat! You are just what you always were, an insubordinate, insolent, common sailor! I have not forgotten that I had you well flogged on *Le Tonnant* on our last cruise."

The marquis did not mince words. What he thought, that he said, and his speech evidently was not agreeable to his auditor.

"No, by God!" cried the other, fiercely, "and I have not forgotten it either! I'm going to see that you pay for it now!"

"I always strive to discharge my debts," replied the

marquis, equably, taking snuff as he spoke, "and my only regret is that my obligation to you is not heavier. I let you off too easily. Do not step over that line!" he added sharply.

"Why not, pray?"

"Well, really I do not see that any explanation need be made you. My wish should suffice. But possibly I can serve my King and country better by allowing you to live and fill that position to which your talents have elevated you, than by having you killed."

"I don't understand," interrupted Garron.

"It is very simple. You can do more harm to the Republic in command of one of her ships than you can dead. Therefore I again advise you not to step over that line."

"Why not? In two bounds I could be on you and you would be nothing in my hands."

"Before you took those two bounds, however," continued the other, suavely and imperturbably, "or, to be more accurate, between the first and second leap, you would be dead."

"How?"

"Shot!"

"By you?"

"Cast your eyes to the right, Monsieur le Capitaine. There!" said the marquis, pointing, "the sunlight falls upon it. Do you mark it?"

"A gun barrel?"

"Yes."

"And behind it?"

"The best marksman in France."

"Brébœuf?"

"Just so. And he has orders to fire if you cross that line! You were never nearer death than at this moment, Jean Garron. Ay, you may well shrink back."

"Curses on you!" cried the man, "I trusted to your honor."

"You did well. But if I had trusted to yours! Pouf!" The marquis smiled and made a little airy gesture. "I know you, you see, Garron. Honor in France died with the King, God rest his soul!" said the old gentleman, lifting his hat. "Only those who loved him cherish it still. You never had any at best. Therefore I took precaution. You have shown me that I did well. Is the interview over?"

"Name of a dog, no! I have not said anything that I intended to say."

"Yet, my good Garron, you have talked not a little and you have occupied some time. The conversation is tiresome to me, and my time I would devote to other things to better advantage. Unless you have something to say of importance, I will bid you *au revoir*."

"I have something important to say," answered Garron; "and I will say it bluntly. You have a granddaughter."

"I suppose," said the marquis, reflectively, "that there is no way by which I can prevent you from speaking about her. But I give you my word that if you had not trusted to my honor I would run you through like the dog you are for daring to mention her name!"

"Talk," said Garron, sapiently, "breaks no bones. I am here to say something and say it I will!"

"Go on."

"I love your granddaughter."

If the earth had suddenly opened beneath his feet, the marquis would not have been more astonished.

"You!" he cried.

A thousand years of overwhelming, overpowering, assured domination was packed into the monosyllable. It fairly bristled with incredulity, astonishment, outraged pride, contempt.

"Even I," answered Garron, boldly. "Why not? I am a man if I was born a peasant. I am a man if you did flog me at the gangway. By God, you shall pay for every lash!"

"You said that before."

"I want you to remember it. The Republic—"

"Some one," interrupted the marquis in unconscious prophecy, "will blow that Republic of yours out of existence with a whiff of grapeshot some day."

"That may be. It stands firm enough at present. 'Twill last my time, I fancy. It has made us all equal. Indeed, if there be any favored citizens, they are the patriots who, like myself, have bared their breasts to the enemy for her defence."

The marquis laughed. He had recovered his imperturbability and the situation even seemed humorous to him.

"You may laugh, monsieur," exclaimed Garron, hotly, "but your fate is in my hands. I can save your life.

Perhaps you, too, can do the Republic more service by being left to live as its enemy than you could by dying." He laughed roughly at his reapplication of the marquis' remark. "At any rate, you are an *émigré* who has returned to France. Sentence of death has been passed upon you and your whole brood. I stood by *la mère guillotine* when the young Captain de Vaudémont had his head taken off. I dipped this rag in his blood," he cried, drawing forth a grimy, ominously stained piece of cloth from his breast and throwing it at the old man's feet. "I have kept it to show you. 'Twas I who laid information against him."

"Brébœuf!" cried the marquis, sharply, infuriated at this terrific exhibition.

There was a sudden movement of the gun barrel through the loophole in the wall.

"Monsieur!" cried Garron, "I trusted to your honor!"

"Do not try me too far!" said the marquis. "Say what you have to say and be gone!"

"'Tis this. You and that brat of a boy, your grandson, shall be beheaded, when I have taken the tower. The woman I shall take for myself without formalities of any kind, when I have taken the tower. Now, I offer you and the boy and anybody else you may have within those walls, saving one, life, and a boat on the shore in a sheltered cove below here — your own boat, for I have taken St. Martin, he's feeding the fish now. You may go anywhere you will, and I will honor the woman by marrying her. Otherwise —"

"Have you done?" asked the marquis, quietly.

"Yes."

"Hear me. You dog, I would kill her with my own hands rather than see her fall into yours! As to taking the tower, you have tried for a week."

"Not with a field-piece, monsieur. See!" He pointed far down the valley to an opening in the mountains. A little cloud of dust hung over the wood. Through it the sunlight gleamed on spear points and bayonets. "There they come! Be advised! Give me the woman. I will treat her well. I will—"

"Brébœuf!" called the marquis in a loud voice, "I am going to count ten. If, when the count is completed, this person is not halfway down the hill, I order you to fire."

"But—" began Garron.

"You have heard," said the marquis. "One!"

Garron hesitated, his face a picture of rage. He glanced from the marquis to that threatening gun barrel.

"Two!" said the marquis.

The man shook his fist at the old nobleman and turned on his heel.

"Three!" said the marquis.

Garron started down the hill.

"Four!" said the marquis.

He quickened his pace.

"I said halfway down the hill," cried the old man, counting five.

The rapid walk broke into a run. The marquis

counted ten, but Garron had almost reached his camp before the number was completed.

The marquis picked up the bit of cloth at his feet, glanced contemptuously at the flying man, apprehensively at the approaching soldiery, and then quickly retraced his steps and reëntered the tower through the wicket gate.

CHAPTER II

THE SILENT BRÉBŒUF

THE Château de Bollène had been a famous stronghold five hundred years before. For centuries its barons had levied tribute on land and sea. The abrogation of the feudal privileges of the great provincial nobility, which began under Louis XI and which had been consummated in the reign of Louis XIV, had brought about the abandonment of the rude pile of stone upon the edge of the Mediterranean. It had been dismantled, allowed to fall into decay, and was in 1793 little better than a ruin. Indeed, the only portion of it left habitable, and consequently defensible, was the low tower into which the marquis had just entered.

Within the tower, which was about twenty feet in diameter and circular in shape, there was a single large room with a low, heavily beamed ceiling. The walls were pierced with loopholes on all sides. A dilapidated stone stairway led to a second story. On the roof there was a crumbling parapet, in which an improvised flagstaff had been fixed for the temporary support of a white banner embroidered with the golden lilies of the dispossessed and recently executed King of France. There was no furniture of any sort in either the upper or lower room. The lower was dimly lighted from

the loopholes and from the opening in the ceiling for the stairs. There were windows in the upper room, originally filled with horn, later with leaded glass, but horn and glass had long since vanished and the openings gaped as empty as the family fortune.

Two or three serviceable leather portmanteaux lay on the floor in the centre of the room. From one of them, which was opened, the marquis had evidently extracted the clothing that he wore. The marquis made it a point to put on his best clothes when facing imminent danger. Always to go into action in full dress was his invariable custom. In that he was not peculiar, for it was the practice of most of the great sea officers of that day of ceremony and form. A rougher and more serviceable blue uniform than the Court suit he wore, that of the Royal Navy of France, lay upon the lid of one of the cases.

In the room there were three people. One of them was bending over his gun, which was still thrust through a loophole nearest the spot where the marquis had parleyed with Garron. This was an elderly man of gigantic build. He was dressed in the peculiar and distinctive costume of the Breton peasantry, save that he wore shoes instead of sabots, and might at that moment have stepped out of La Vendée and the Army of Charette or de la Rochejaquelein. Out of deference to the other occupants he had removed his hat, and his long gray hair fell upon his broad shoulders. He neither turned, moved, nor spoke when the marquis entered. Bending slightly, the better to

see through the narrow opening, he kept his eyes fixed on the enemy.

Musket in hand, at another loophole some distance from the man, thus enabling her to cover another possible point of attack, stood a woman, tall, sturdy, powerful. She wore a small cap upon her head. Her short dress disclosed a pair of stout limbs and heavily shod feet. Her sleeves were rolled up, and her naked arms looked almost strong enough to match those of the man. As the marquis entered she allowed the butt of her musket to drop on the stone floor and turned and looked at him.

In the middle of the room, also gun in hand, stood a second woman. She was not quite so tall as the other and was cast in a finer mould. In cut and fashion her dress was like that of her humbler sister, although more elegant. In material it was much richer. From her appearance she might be eighteen years of age. She had by no means reached her full development, but to the most casual observer it was evident that she would eventually attain to a tall and beautifully proportioned womanhood when she had reached her appointed stature. What she then lacked in mere physical strength as compared with the other she made up in nervous force.

The older woman, at the loophole, was excited and trembling. The weapon in her hand shook with her agitation. The younger, in the centre of the room, was as calm and composed as the marquis himself. Indeed, in many ways she resembled her grandfather, although

he was not so tall for a man as she bade fair to be for a woman. There was a slight flush upon her pale cheek, indeed, but the hand clasping the gun barrel was as steady as if her slender fingers held nothing more harmful than a fan. Waiting to be spoken to, she said nothing, only the relief in her eyes and their eager, questioning look proclaiming at once her satisfaction and her interest. The marquis glanced at her with natural pride; then he turned —

"Watch your loophole, Aurore!" he said sharply.

"Yes, Monsieur le Marquis," she responded volubly, glad of a chance to speak, "I thank God Monsieur le Marquis comes back alive from his interview with that *méchant* Garron."

"I was in no danger, my good Aurore," returned the marquis, smiling, "so long as Brébœuf attended to his duty."

"Oh, the immaculate Brébœuf!" rattled on the maid, who, being her young mistress' foster-sister, was a privileged character. "He always attends to his duty."

"He does," retorted the marquis, dryly; "now do you attend to yours."

There was a shake of Brébœuf's broad shoulders, a sort of silent laugh, which showed that he at least appreciated the retort of his master. Abashed for the moment, Aurore lifted her gun and turned once again to her station.

"Mademoiselle," said the nobleman, bowing low to his granddaughter — he was quite as courteous to the

women of his own household as to those of any other — "allow me."

As he spoke he slipped off the laced coat with its blazonry of orders that he had worn, and laid it carefully in the portmanteau.

"The Republicans," he remarked lightly, "have abolished distinctions and decreed extinctions not only of the gentry but of the noble family of valets as well. Every man is his own lackey — "

"Let me, sir — " interrupted his granddaughter.

"By no means," said the marquis, quickly, "I did but jest, Louise. I am a sailor, accustomed to wait upon myself — if I have to. If that were all the Republic had done for France, we might forgive it."

As he spoke he donned the plain blue naval uniform with its red facings, exchanged his buckled shoes for a pair of serviceable boots, picked up his musket from the wall where he had rested it, and stood shorn of all his finery save his jewelled sword.

"Now," he remarked, "I am ready for them again. Were you alarmed like Aurore for my safety, my dear?"

"No, sir."

"Ah, then you trusted to the honor of Monsieur Garron?"

"No more than you did, sir; I trusted to your tact and courage."

"And Brébœuf's marksmanship?"

"Of course," answered the girl, looking at the broad shoulders of the ancient servitor with a faint smile of approbation.

"Could you hear what was going on?"

"You gave me no permission, sir. I did not listen."

"That's well! Should you like to know what Garron wanted?"

"If it please you, sir," said the girl, inclining her head.

Again her grandfather looked upon her with pride and satisfaction. These were the manners he liked. The ancient deference of a child for father or grandsire, the unquestioning obedience of youth for age, the respect of tender years to rank and position, the submission of femininity to manhood — already old-fashioned in France, which has set the fashion for the rest of the world in these as in many other vain things.

"My dear child," he said, "he came to offer us terms."

"Terms, monsieur?"

"Yes. He will let us all go if we will yield to him the woman whom he designs to make his wife."

"Give me leave, my lord," cried Aurore, who was keeping a better watch with her ears than her eyes, at the same time dropping her gun to the stone floor with a tremendous clatter and coming forward with arms akimbo, "I would do anything else for you, but marry Jean Garron I won't!"

"Not even to save me, woman?" asked the marquis, quietly.

"Oh, as to that, —" said the other, halting lamely, "well, I — I will agree to even that for you and mademoiselle. But leave me your pistols, Monsieur le

Marquis, that I may kill him and myself in the bridal chamber."

"I will not have Aurore sacrificed to that brute, grandfather," interrupted Louise.

"Oh, mademoiselle, for you I—"

"Peace, woman!" said the marquis, sternly, "keep to your loophole! He does not want you!"

"Not me!" gasped the woman with her mouth open. "Why, it cannot be—"

"'Tis mademoiselle," said the marquis, suavely, "upon whom he designs to bestow the honor of his name."

"Impossible!" cried the girl.

"It is even so."

"Why didn't you kill him where he stood?"

"I was inclined to do so, but he was under the safeguard of my honor. One must keep faith even with these assassins!"

"Monsieur!" called out a boyish voice from the roof above, "a body of men in uniform have joined the camp. There are horses among them. The sunlight shines upon a cannon."

"You keep good watch, Honoré," returned the marquis, raising his voice, "Garron told me he expected a field-piece. It has come. Report to me anything further that you may see. Do not expose yourself needlessly. A good soldier, you know, does not throw away his life for nothing."

"Very well, sir, I shall be careful," replied the young count.

"Poor boy," said the marquis, softly, speaking to no one apparently. "Well, he must learn to face death earlier than the de Vaudémonts have been accustomed to meet it. Do you see anything, Brébœuf?"

The old man was chary of words. He turned his head and nodded.

"Has the boy seen correctly?"

Another nod.

"Go you to him above. Watch with him there. You served me faithfully a moment since," he added, as the man withdrew his gun and marched toward the stairway saluting his master as he passed him. "But then you have served me faithfully all your life. I suppose your fingers itched to pull the trigger?"

Brébœuf, nodding a third time, mounted the stair.

"Well, some day, please God, you may have a chance at that dastard," continued the marquis.

"Grandfather," said the girl, "if they have a cannon they can batter down this crumbling old tower. You said yourself after the attack of yesterday that if they had a heavy gun we could no longer defend the place."

Another man would have dissembled to another woman. Not so the marquis. Gentle blood in France had faced too many appalling dangers in the recent past to quail at the thought of another, however imminent and terrible.

"You are right, my child. If they put a field-piece on that hill just out of range of our muskets, they can knock the tower to pieces."

"And then?"

"Then we can die as become nobles of France, servants of our King."

"Yes, but how—"

"Brébœuf and I will hold the stairway. You and Honoré and Aurore will be above. Perhaps I may let the boy come down. He is old enough to die by his grandfather's side. The pistols are for you and Aurore. You must never fall alive into their hands."

"Oh, if Captain St. Martin were only here! He swore he would be here with a boat. We have come across the width of France from Paris through every danger without mishap, thinking to find a boat to take us to Italy, to Austria—anywhere, to safety—only to be trapped at last! Has Captain St. Martin proved a traitor?"

"My dear child," said the marquis, quietly, "he has proved his fidelity with his life. Garron learned of the plan some way. He seized our friend, killed him, scuttled the boat, or at all events made off with it, and, *voilà*, here we are!"

"Is there no escape?"

"None."

"What did you say to Garron's proposition, monsieur?"

"I gave him just ten seconds to get down that hill," answered the old man, grimly. "You should have seen him run!"

"Monsieur," said the young woman, earnestly, coming closer and laying her hand on his shoulder, "you are one of the great nobles of France. A vice-admiral

in her navy, a man of experience, ability, and courage. You bear a great name and have a rank and position upon which to rally adherents to the support of our boy King, Louis XVII. I am only a girl. My life is of value to no one. I will go to this Jean Garron. I will agree to his terms. I will consent to be his wife. What said Aurore? Our marriage day shall witness his death and mine."

"Oh, mademoiselle!" cried her foster-sister, deprecatingly.

"Not even for France, my dear child, would I consent to that," said the marquis; "I despair of the land we love. The people have gone mad. I am an old man. There is but little I can do. If I could not attend my King to the scaffold, at least a death here will not be unfitting. What is there to live for?"

"Another King; a King dies, but royalty lives. The land changes masters, but it is still France. For you, and for France, I will go to Jean Garron, and —"

"Louise," said the old man, drawing from his breast the blood-stained piece of cloth, "you cannot even pretend with him. This man is immediately responsible for the death of my son. To sate his inveterate hatred of the family he dipped this in the blood of your murdered father at the guillotine."

"O God, my father!" cried the young comtesse, shrinking away from the gruesome object in the old man's hand.

"You see it is impossible."

The girl hid her face in her hands and shuddered. Aurore burst into sobs where she stood.

"Come, my child, no more of this," said the old man, tenderly. "There is nothing to be done. We must face death as we have faced life, with smiling countenances,"—it was the philosophy of France—"and leave to the good God—"

CHAPTER III

THE COMTESSE TAKES COMMAND

"GRANDFATHER," cried the boy from the room above, "they are running the gun over to the hill nearest the tower."

"I suppose so," said the marquis, stepping over to the loophole and glancing hastily through it. "You would better come here, for the present, my boy. You too, Brébœuf. The top of the tower will go first. 'Tis the weakest part."

Even as he spoke there came faintly into the room a muffled roar. An instant after the sound was followed by the crash of a heavy shot against the upper wall of the tower which fairly shook the place.

"A heavy gun!" exclaimed the old man, coolly.

Aurore screamed but the comtesse said nothing. There was a rain of stone upon the floor from the impact of the shot. In the confusion those below heard the sputter of a musket from the chamber above.

"Brébœuf!" called the marquis, sharply, "come down, you and the count, at once!"

Immediately Brébœuf, half leading, half dragging a boy of fifteen years of age, who looked strikingly like his sister, came plunging down the stairs.

"Are you hurt, Honoré?"

"No, monsieur."

"Who fired that shot?"

"I did, sir. I couldn't help it — I — I —"

"It was a wasted shot, my lad. Good soldiers are as chary of shots as they are of lives. They are out of range of your musket."

"But can we do nothing at all, sir?" asked Honoré.

"At present nothing but wait. Have all the pieces charged, and if the rascals make a practicable breach in the walls and any of us survive the process we can give them a warm reception when they attempt to storm the tower!"

While the guns were being reloaded by the careful Brébœuf, by the direction of the marquis the two women retreated to a position where the stone stairway, which happened to rise on the side which was receiving the battering, gave them some additional protection; where, indeed, save for flying pieces of stone, they were reasonably safe until the inevitable attack was delivered. Brébœuf and the marquis stood withdrawn from the probable line of fire, but at the loopholes whence they could see what was going on and be in a position to fire should the enemy approach within range of their small arms. By his grandfather's side young Honoré took his post.

Each individual had a musket, but in addition the marquis had given one of his pistols to each of the women. These they had thrust into the broad sashes which confined their short-waisted gowns. They both

knew for what purpose they were designed. The marquis and Comte Honoré wore swords, while Brébœuf had buckled around his waist an immense ship's cutlass somewhat like that carried by Garron.

For a time no one said anything. The siege gun was served with accuracy and rapidity. The battering on the tower wall was practically continuous. It was a terrific strain for the inmates to remain in quiet inaction and see their only bulwark of defence battered to pieces. But there was nothing else to do. The way they severally bore it was in consonance with their characters and dispositions. Brébœuf stood resting upon his musket with a gloomy, saturnine countenance expressing nothing. Aurore sank down on the stairs and whimpered piteously. The boy was quivering with excitement. The old marquis was as composed as if he were attending a levée at Versailles or St. Germain. Once he took his snuff-box from his pocket, elaborately helped himself, stepped over to his grandson, and offered him a pinch with a profound bow. He had noticed the youngster's emotion, and the simple action reassured and strengthened the boy and he emulated his grandfather by taking a pinch. To take a pinch of snuff gracefully under any circumstances was a part of the marquis' religion, and he narrowly watched the comte to see how he acquitted himself. He smiled with approval when he found that his grandson did it extremely well, with a manner exactly like his own.

Then the marquis, with unheard-of condescension, turned and offered the snuff-box to Brébœuf. The old

seaman started back in surprise, waving his hand deprecatingly.

"We live," said the marquis, "in the days of the Republic, my good Brébœuf. All men, so our friend Garron informs us, are created equal. There are no longer gentle and simple in the world outside. They all belong to the aristocracy. Inside let us be of the fashion. If fidelity and long service are forgotten and loyalty is an unregarded virtue in France, I, at least, am not unmindful. We face death, my good Brébœuf, and there is as great a difference between the high and low at this moment as in any other, and will be in heaven or hell, I am persuaded. But, I will permit you for the moment. Oh, Garron, we who are about to die take snuff! Brébœuf, will you honor me?"

With a gleam of pride on his craggy countenance Brébœuf thrust a huge forefinger and thumb in the dainty box, helped himself to a generous pinch with a gesture singularly like that of the marquis, bowed before him, straightened himself up, struck the barrel of his gun with his hand, and resumed his watch.

"Grandfather," said Louise, "will it be long?"

"Not long, my dear. See! The wall is already crumbling. A few more shots like that last and we are open to the enemy."

There was a silence in the room for a space, and then the voice of the girl broke it.

"We have no priest. Would you consider it impertinent, sir, if I said a word of prayer?"

"Prayer always becomes the nobles of France," said

the old man, gravely, removing his hat, while the voice of his granddaughter uttered the Paternoster which she had been accustomed to repeat in Latin in the convent whence she had been hurried at the outbreak of the Revolution. Before the little prayer was completed, however, a final and well-placed shot striking the weakened and shattered wall hit exactly the right spot and tore out a large section of it. Bits of stone and mortar almost as hard flew in all directions throughout the place. One of them struck the marquis in the forehead, hurling him to the floor. Enough of the wall had fallen to afford an easy entrance into the room. With a cry the girl went to the side of the old man.

"They are coming!" cried Honoré, who had run to the nearest loophole without noticing his grandfather's condition.

Brébœuf looked uncertainly at the young girl. The marquis was senseless. Naturally the leadership fell to her. She rose to the emergency in an instant.

"They will fire no more with the cannon," she cried. "We will go to the upper room. Brébœuf, do you carry your master. Come, Honoré. Come, Aurore."

Lifting the old man tenderly the seaman bore him up the shattered stairs. The upper room was a ruin. Large sections of the wall had been knocked to pieces. The roof gaped to the skies. By some lucky chance, however, the parapet from which the flag fluttered yet remained intact. Heaps of débris on the floor gave convenient concealment to the man, the boy, and the

two women. Gently laying down his burden, Brébœuf knelt behind the natural barricade, musket in hand.

"The marquis!" cried the girl, who had been last to come up, "is he dead?"

Brébœuf shook his head.

"They are coming, Louise! They are coming!" cried Honoré.

After a momentary glance the girl dropped to her knees by the side of the sailor. If her grandfather was dead, he was spared assassination. If he were yet alive, there would be time to succor him. Meanwhile she had one life at least left in her gun; another in the weapon at her waist.

The Republicans were scampering rapidly over the intervening ground toward the tower, brandishing their weapons, and filling the air with their cries. In the lead was Jean Garron, who, to do him justice, was no coward. As he came within range Brébœuf took careful aim at him. Fate was kind to the Republican leader. Just as the Breton pressed the trigger Garron stumbled and fell. The man immediately in his rear pitched forward dead.

"You got them both, Brébœuf!" screamed Honoré, wild with excitement.

The old man shook his head.

"Missed!" he growled.

He had seen Garron scramble to his feet. He snatched a musket from Aurore and fired again; another man fell. Now Comte Honoré's piece cracked. Less skilful than Brébœuf, he only struck his man in

the arm. The old sailor stepped back and took up the marquis' gun. As he did so Louise pressed the trigger of her musket. Before Brébœuf could fire a third time, however, the roar of a heavy cannon from seaward burst in their ears through the torrent of shouts and cries and crackling musketry, for the Republicans, as soon as they came within range, had opened a rapid small-arm fire on the tower, which, as it was fortunately aimed at the lower room, where, until they were undeceived, they supposed the defenders to be, had as yet done little damage.

Two men were struck dead by an eighteen-pound shot that came tearing through the huddled men now close by the tower. Before the Republicans could recover from their consternation at this extraordinary intervention, the first shot was followed by a second, a third, a fourth. The last one dismounted the field-piece. The ranks of the assailants halted in confusion, and at this opportune moment Brébœuf discharged his last musket shot into the hesitant men. Then, conscious that if they were to be succored, as it seemed, it would not be necessary to reserve the charges, the Breton snatched the pistol from Aurore's belt, fired it, received another from the hand of the young comtesse, and with it accounted for still another enemy.

By this time the Republicans were in full retreat. The besieged scarcely realized what had happened. That they were safe for the time being was all they knew. So soon as the assailants retreated the girl fell on her knees by the side of her grandfather. She

wiped the blood from his face. Aurore bravely ran to the room below for some water and soon the old man opened his eyes. Another shot boomed out from seaward.

"A ship's gun," murmured the marquis, "a heavy piece."

"A ship, a ship!" shouted Honoré, who had run to the other side of the tower and was gazing out to sea.

"What ship?" asked the old marquis, faintly.

"An English ship by the flag, sir. Boats are putting off from her."

"We are safe," said the old man, "yet I had rather it were any other than an English ship. I do not love the English. What of Garron and his mob?"

"They are running down to the river bank, below the tower," cried Honoré. "Boats are pulling for the shore," he continued, turning his gaze to seaward again. "The men are landing! They are fighting! They run!"

"Who run?" asked the marquis.

"The Republicans!"

Brébœuf had been busy recharging the weapons. He fired them in rapid succession at the enemy. One final shot gave him especial satisfaction.

"Winged!" he cried in hoarse triumph.

"The English are mounting the cliff toward the tower," cried Honoré, who was recklessly exposing himself that he might see the action. At the same instant there was a battering on the doors below.

"I will go down and admit them," said the comtesse.

"Honoré, do you and Brébœuf stay here and protect me with your guns."

The sailor, who let no opportunity escape him, had again reloaded the pieces. They were laid carefully by his side, convenient to his hand should occasion for use arise.

"Come, Aurore!" said the girl, springing down the stair.

CHAPTER IV

THE CAPTAIN OF THE SHIP

HAD the wind been other than it was, the ship would have been perilously near the land. The weather, however, was settled, a steady land breeze was blowing, there were no shoals to be feared, the water was deep under the cliffs, and there was always a chance for an exchange of shots with a French battery or an opportunity to turn loose a broadside upon some Republican camp. Consequently they hugged the shore. There was a little spice of excitement about it as well, something of a risk, which was eagerly welcomed to break the monotony of cruising. Besides, the admiral had instructed them to do as much damage to Republican ports and Republican forces along the coast as was possible — without, of course, endangering the ship.

That portion of the Mediterranean littoral along which they had been running since they left Naples was peculiarly gloomy, forbidding, and desolate. Back of the shore-line rose the summits of the towering mountains. No evidences of habitations were visible save here and there a few wretched fishermen's huts in some sequestered cove near the water's edge, or a rude huddle of buildings marking some undefended, insignificant seaport at the head of some dangerous estuary of

the sea. These were beneath the attention of the *Agamemnon* and her crew.

The day was brilliantly fair and although the season was late in the fall the air was mild and pleasant. Morning quarters and the consequent inspection had been finished some time before. Some of the officers and men of the watch were busy about the decks attending to some of the never ending details of a seaman's task. Aloft on the crosstrees men with glasses in hand were searching the shore. Everybody else who could was enjoying one of those rare and brief periods of relaxation which the discipline sometimes allowed, and all hands had apparently abandoned all thought of a possible enemy. The captain paced the high poop in lonely magnificence.

The coast to starboard and before them trended sharply to the southward in the shape of a long, rocky tongue of land about half a mile ahead of the ship. This promontory shut off the view in the direction of their present course. The handsome ship-of-the-line under easy sail was slowly drawing nearer to it. The time had about arrived when a touch of the helm and a pull on the braces would be necessary to swing her head away from the present course so that they could give the cape a wide berth as they passed by it to discover what lay beyond.

The quiet of the morning was broken by the muffled report of a cannon, just as the young lieutenant pacing the quarter-deck had lifted the trumpet to give a necessary order. As a spur to a lagging steed the noise

instantly awakened every man on the ship to alert attention. The seamen in the gangways and on the forecastle crowded to the weather side of the ship, looking eagerly in the direction of the sound. The desultory conversation among the officers on the quarter-deck stopped; one or two ran for glasses, and the others approached nearer to the windward side, a place reserved by immemorial custom for the officer of the watch, as they stared and stared toward the shore. The watch officer immediately clambered upon the weather rail and, steadying himself by a backstay, bade his midshipman bring him a glass, with which he swept the cliffs close at hand.

Above them all the little captain, who had been leaning listlessly against the rail, suddenly straightened up and walked rapidly to the break of the poop. He surveyed his ship for an instant, a flush of pride mantling his cheek. He had said that the *Agamemnon*, although not a new ship, was the finest sixty-four in the service, and certainly he was a judge.

As he looked over her, he was struck anew by the spotless neatness of her decks, as clean as sand and holystone could make them; by the polished cannon, the brass work shining like gold; by the new canvas, for the ship had been recently refitted, gleaming white in the sunlight; by every rope and brace and shroud and stay in its proper place, in all the delicate tracery of gear and rigging which seemed so complicated to inexperience and was so simple to knowledge. As his eye fell upon the sturdy, splendid specimens of men and

the alert, active boys, many of whom he had personally recruited from among his neighbors for his crew; as his glance took in the little group of officers, many of them destined while following in his wake to attain fame and rank only less great than his own, his heart throbbed with pride. He was convinced that he had spoken truly when he claimed perfection for his ship and her people.

At first glance the little officer looked like anything but the captain of the ship. He was about five feet five inches in stature, and his fragile, delicate habit of body made him seem even smaller than he was. Thin, not to say emaciated, with a pallor in his face, his appearance gave no promise whatever of bodily vigor.

He had taken off his hat a moment before and passed his hand across his brow. Had any been near to observe, he would have seen a great mass of dark hair, a careless "shock" his friends called it, pushed back from a noble forehead. His eyes were deep-set and hollow. They were changeable eyes, sometimes soft, melancholy, appealing, almost feminine; again hard, cold, brilliant, almost terrible. His thin but youthful face, unhealthily pale, was somewhat marked by lines, whether of suffering or of decision a casual inspection could scarcely determine. His nose was slightly aquiline and decidedly strong. His lips were full and pouting and subject to the same changes as his eyes. Sometimes they entreated, as those of a child might have done; at other times they straightened and contracted under pressure into a thin, rigid, resolute line.

There was not much humor or merriment in the face, which was nevertheless appealing and strangely attractive.

There was something womanish about the appearance of the whole man. That he was variable, changeable, whimsical, a shrewd student of physiognomy would have instantly divined. That he was vain, in a harmless, innocent way, and therefore susceptible to flattery, was apparent. That he was sensitive, moody, was certain. Nervousness and excitability were as natural to him as breathing.

Only the eye of keen intuition or wide experience could read beneath all these things another man. When the exigency demanded, the frail and feeble body became suddenly able to sustain fatigues and endure nervous strains that might have crushed a giant. The gentle, vehement, half-feminine, sensitive nature took upon itself characteristics at once of baresark fury and Viking courage, and the variable hesitant habit gave place to a determination as persistent as it was invincible. In the crisis of danger he became as cool in his fighting as if he had never heard of nerves.

A creature of contrasts he, with his womanish eyes, his child's lips, and his lion heart.

To be a hero and a master is not always to look the one or the other. In appearance James Wolfe, to cite an instance, was the homeliest and most unpromising of men. Nothing external in him corresponded to the qualities he exhibited. He bore the outward seeming of weakness, physical and mental. Yet a bolder, braver

heart, a keener, brighter mind, a more resolute, determined soul, never belied the evidence of frail containing shell.

Like Wolfe the captain of the *Agamemnon* looked no hero, though no man could better claim the title. He seemed no heaven-born commander, although no one now questions his right to the highest place. That other little officer, he of Toulon, of Montenotte, of Arcola, of Rivoli, of the marshes of Mantua, was a hero and a captain and he looked it. No one who saw him could mistake. His claim glowed in his Olympian face. Once seen it was unhesitatingly allowed. That was his good fortune.

His great antagonist lacked this outward and visible sign of the qualities that were within him. But no Viking that ever lorded it over the narrow seas had more of the real man in him than the little captain of the *Agamemnon*, standing upon her deck that sunny morning, surveying his ship. For this was the greatest man of his class that the world had ever seen, that the world probably ever shall see, if it be not rash to attempt the prophet's rôle.

There have been great soldiers, there have been great statesmen, there have been great scientists, there have been great artists, there have been great musicians, there have been great preachers — differing one from another in glory as the stars. To attempt to place upon one brow the acknowledged palm in any field of human supremacy would bring about endless discussion and exceeding sharp contention. No one

can dispute that the captain of the *Agamemnon* was destined to become the first of those "that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters."

Not only because he was a thorough sailor; there were others who in mere technical seamanship could have contested his supremacy. Not only because he was a man of unbounded courage; there were others, and in all navies of the world there have been others, who would yield to no man on that score. But because he manifested on the sea, in the performance of the various duties that fell to him, a breadth of mind that enabled him to penetrate the most secret designs of his enemies; an ability to put his finger upon the weakest spot in the opposing plan; a faculty for approaching the crucial moment in the best possible way; a capacity for following up the faintest clue; a determination which nothing short of the complete destruction of his enemies could satisfy; which marked him as unique among seamen as Alexander, Hannibal, and Napoleon were among captains. He was thorough to the point of annihilation. Here was no bluff old seaman, no stubborn British bulldog, but a man of the highest science.

All this he was at sea. On shore he was as weak as water, the prey of a common, vulgar courtesan! Out of his element nothing; in it everything! On the ocean a god; on the land a slave!

He was the first to apply the art of war to engagements on the sea, as the great strategists and tacticians applied it on the shore. His combinations and

manœuvres resembled those of a master of the art of war setting his squadrons and moving his armies on the field. His cruises were campaigns, his battles demonstrations.

Sea fighting before, and as a matter of fact, for some time after, his time consisted in bringing two contesting fleets side by side and letting them hammer away at each other until one side was beaten. Rodney was never so astonished in his life as when he pierced de Grasse's line in the battle of the Saints. Howe, the greatest of tacticians before him, cannot be mentioned with him. St. Vincent, first of disciplinarians, cannot be considered with him. We have to go back to the "great Lord Hawke" to establish even an approximate standard of comparison, and even he fails to measure up. Yet all these were great captains and great men.

All the skill and strategy in old-fashioned fighting took place in the manœuvres before the engagement, and usually there was but little of either. What there was generally consisted in getting and maintaining the weather gage. Such a thing as concentrating the whole upon a part, striking the weaker position with the stronger force, was scarcely thought of. When a battle was joined, it was ship to ship, and then "hammer and tongs" until one or the other gave way.

If there was a cardinal principle entrenched in a sea officer's mind, it was that at all hazards he was to preserve intact his line of battle. Under no circumstances was it to be broken. The captain of the *Agamemnon*, when the time came, threw such antiquated notions to

the winds. He made his own tactics. In one battle he revolutionized naval warfare. His example, like Napoleon's, must be followed, it cannot be surpassed.

There was something about the man which calls to mind one of those rare and delicate-seeming blades that were made by the armorers of Damascus and Toledo; as flexible, as elastic, as beautiful as a woman, yet than which, in adequate hands, no weapons have ever been so deadly and so terrible.

But life and fame to him were in the womb of the future. The captain of the *Agamemnon*, standing there on the deck of his own ship, had not yet enjoyed opportunity to prove what he would become, although the time was not far distant when the world would rub its eyes and open them upon that new epoch in sea fighting.

And the name of the epoch would be Nelson!

CHAPTER V

ENTER THE *AGAMEMNON*

"Mr. Nisbett," said the captain, quietly, to a young bit of a midshipman standing at the foot of the ladder leading to the quarter-deck, "desire Mr. Berry to hail the crosstrees about that shot, sir."

The captain's voice was high-pitched and somewhat sharp. As the midshipman touched his hat and scampered toward the officer of the deck, that functionary, who had heard the order, anticipated its delivery, and in a voice of tremendous power hailed the lookout: —

"Crosstrees there!"

"Ay, ay, sir," came faintly from the dizzy heights forward and above his head.

"You heard that shot. Do you see anything?"

"Seems to come from yonder, sir," answered the man, pointing toward the headland.

"Ay. But d'ye see any smoke, man?"

"Nothing, your honor."

"There it goes again!" burst from the little group on the quarter-deck, as the sound of a second shot was heard faintly in the still morning.

"Mr. Berry," said the captain, speaking directly to him.

"Sir?"

"Set the light sail, sir, and get around that point in a hurry. If there is any firing going on I want to take a hand."

"Ay, ay, sir. Boatswain's mate, call all hands," cried Berry.

The order was supererogatory, for all hands except the mess cooks and servants were already on deck.

"Aloft the light yardmen!" continued the officer of the deçk. "Loose the royal and to'gallant sails! Lead along the royal and to'gallant halyards! Man the weather braces! Starboard your helm! Let fall! Sheet home! Hoist away! Brace in! Handsomely! Steady!"

"Mr. Macartney," said the captain, as the first lieutenant of the ship came leaping up the companionway to take the deck at the call of "All hands!" as was his privilege under such circumstances, "leave Mr. Berry in charge. I want a word with you."

By the ready handling of the sailors and the nice seamanship of Berry the *Agamemnon* swung to port and with her speed greatly accelerated by the additional sail which had been set coasted along the point at a broad angle to her former course. As she ran along the shore she speedily drew abreast the end of the promontory. The captain and first lieutenant were busily engaged in conversation on the poop, but nothing ever took the captain's mind from the ship he commanded.

"Mr. Berry," he said presently, "give that point yonder a wide berth before you brace up. I don't

know what sort of jagged reefs it may terminate in. When you have cleared it run into the bay yonder."

It was quite easy now from the position they had attained to see that the promontory was the edge of what formed one side of a wide, deep bay. As they drew swiftly past its narrow apex they could see at the head of the bay, perhaps half a mile away, a ruined tower standing upon a high cliff on the very edge of the water. On one side a rivulet flowed into the sea over a short stretch of sandy beach. From the flagstaff on the tower a white flag fluttered gayly in the breeze. On one of the hills inland a short distance from the tower a cannon was planted, and as they watched it they saw a puff of smoke from it followed by another report. Around the gun was a group of men. The glass disclosed that many of them were soldiers.

"What can it be?" asked the captain. "A white flag? A surrender?"

"I think, sir," said Lieutenant Macartney, who was staring at the banner through the glass, "that it's the old flag of France, the royal standard."

"Why, so it is!" said the captain, looking through the glass in his turn. "There's no thought of surrender there. I have it! They are holding the tower against those blackguardly Republicans! We'll take a hand in that game. Mr. Macartney, take the deck. Run in within a cable's length of the shore. You needn't anchor. If the wind holds, we shall be able to heave to. I will send off a boat party and see what we can do."

"I am to go in charge of it, I suppose?" asked Macartney.

"Of course," answered the captain, as Macartney descended the ladder and received the trumpet from Berry.

"Hadn't we better give them a shot or two when we get near enough, sir?" asked Macartney.

"Ay," answered his commander, "send Berry and his division to the guns. Let them cast loose and provide."

The *Agamemnon* was swiftly approaching the shore while this conversation was taking place. Presently with nice seamanship Macartney, to whose judgment the captain had left the determination of the matter, headed the great ship to a spot where she was equally distant from the enclosing sides of the bay and in such position that she had a clear way to sea and her natural drift while hove to would be in that direction. The light sails were furled, the main-yard swung, and the ship stopped with her starboard broadside bearing on the shore.

All this time the gun on the hill was blazing away at the tower. No reply appeared to be made. There was not a sign of life about the tower except the flag fluttering bravely from the staff surmounting it. Just as the ship completed her movements and came to a rest the watchers on her decks observed the men clustered around the guns running toward the castle. They were near enough to distinguish the shouts of "*Vive la République! A bas les aristocrats!*" which broke from the charging men.

The captain instantly realized that a breach had been made in the castle and that the assailants were about to take it by storm. So soon as the yelling soldiers came within range of the tower, however, puffs of smoke followed by sharp cracks from muskets protruding from loopholes indicated that the defenders were alive. Here and there a man fell, but the fire from the tower was so feeble and so slow that there was no appreciable check to the advance of the mob, which had begun to empty its muskets at the defenders.

"We must stop that!" said the captain, quickly. "Mr. Berry!"

As he spoke there was a puff of smoke forward on the main deck of the ship, followed by the roar of a heavy gun. As the smoke cleared away they could see that the well-aimed shot had fallen into the midst of the attacking party, several of whom it struck down. The assailants stopped amazed. The tower had hidden the approach of the ship, and in the excitement of the charge which took place just as the *Agamemnon* had become visible they had not marked her arrival.

"Well done, Berry!" cried the captain. "Give them another!"

Other guns in the battery were fired. The French turned and fled instantly, seeking concealment behind the broken rock at the foot of the hill whence they had come. A lucky shot from the *Agamemnon* just then shattered the field-piece. Meanwhile three heavily armed boat-crews had been called away, and three of the ship's

cutters loaded to the gunwales with seamen and marines pulled for the shore.

In the stern sheet of the first and largest boat was Lieutenant Macartney, who had command of the party. With him, explaining that he came simply as a visitor, sat the little captain, who said he had a fancy to see the shore. In truth, when there was any fighting going on it was difficult, if not impossible, to keep him out of it.

So soon as the French perceived the boats pulling away from the ship, their leader, who seemed to be a man of courage and not without address, led his men forward under cover of the rocks to the opposite side of the river mouth from that on which the tower stood. There they opened a hasty and ineffectual musketry fire upon the boats.

The men on the ship-of-the-line could not fire at the French for fear of hitting their own men now close to the beach. Indeed it was not necessary for them to do so, for as the first boat grounded on the shingle at the foot of the cliff the marines leaped out and instantly took cover on the bank of the river and returned the fire of the French on the other side. They were reënforced by those in the second boat and presently by the blue-jackets from the thwarts. The third boat, in obedience to a signal from Macartney, moved to port and landed her men in such a position as to take the French on the river bank in the rear. Their position was untenable, and they broke and fled precipitately, leaving some of their number dead on the shore. Their line of

retreat took them in easy range of the tower. As they ran, the garrison thereof opened fire upon them again. The last to retreat was the French commander. He gave back reluctantly, stopping to shake his fist in the direction of the tower. The instant that he did so a well-aimed shot from the tower struck him and shattered his arm. Happy Brébœuf!

Having cleared the beach of the French, Macartney next moved toward the castle. The river mouth had evidently been used as some sort of a boat-landing by the inhabitants of the tower, for there to the right was a natural flight of stairs cut in the stone leading up the cliff from the dilapidated remains of a wharf. Up this stairway Macartney, sword in hand, sprang. Close beside him was his captain, who had, true to his statement, taken no part in the operations save that of a looker-on. Following these two came the seamen. The marines were told off to cover the landing-place and protect the boats in case the French should seek to reoccupy their position on the other side of the river. To gain the top of the cliff required but a moment. There they found themselves fronted by an enormous door in the tower. With his sword hilt Macartney beat upon it.

"Open!" he cried in French, which he spoke perfectly. "We bring rescue."

A voice came faintly through the thick old planking.

"Who is there? Who are you?"

"Lieutenant Robert Macartney, of His Britannic Majesty's ship *Agamemnon*, and Captain Horatio Nelson. Strange, that sounds like a woman's voice," he said

to the captain. "How can I reassure her? Ah, I have it! Are you there?" he cried.

"Yes," answered the voice.

"Listen. *Vive le Roi!* Open the door."

"In a moment, monsieur."

The young officer heard some one fumbling with the bolts and bars. Presently the latter were drawn and the two enormous doors creaked on their hinges as some one strove to pull them. No one thought of the more easily manipulated wicket in the excitement of the moment.

"The doors are unbarred, monsieur," said the voice from within, "but we cannot open them."

"It *is* a woman's voice, by Jove!" cried Macartney. "Stand clear!" he shouted. He put his shoulder to the doors and after a violent effort forced them open. Such was the strength with which he had thrust that he almost fell into the lower room of the tower when the doors gave way. Recovering himself as best he could after his unceremonious entrance, Macartney found himself face to face with a tall slender girl of perhaps sixteen or seventeen years of age.

She was dressed in a short-waisted, short-skirted gown of blue. Around her neck was a fichu of white. Her head, which was crowned by a mass of golden hair in slightly disordered condition, was bare. There was a smudge of powder on her face. In her hand she clasped a musket. Behind her stood another girl of about the same age but of a coarser and more vigorous build. She was dressed like the first save that her

clothing was of plainer material. She also carried a musket.

"Mademoiselle," said the startled lieutenant, taking all in in one swift glance, "where is the garrison of the tower?"

"The tower is held by my grandfather, my brother, our two servants, and myself, monsieur."

"And your grandfather?"

"Is wounded; my brother, a boy, attends him upstairs. The other servant keeps watch toward the camp. We are the rest."

"Your name, mademoiselle?"

The girl bowed gravely toward him.

"I am the Comtesse de Vaudémont," she said.

CHAPTER VI

THE VICE-ADMIRAL GOES ABOARD

"FAITH, mademoiselle," said Macartney, smiling at her — and indeed she was fair enough to bring a smile to any man's lips at the sight of her, especially if he was an Irishman — "you must pardon us for the abrupt way in which we precipitated ourselves into your presence."

"You came in the very nick of time, messieurs."

"I am glad to know that. What is the cause of the trouble?"

"I am — at least, we are for the King. My grandfather, the Marquis de Vaudémont —"

"Is your grandfather the Vice-admiral de Vaudémont?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"I know who he is. I was a midshipman under Admiral Hughes in the West Indies a dozen years ago. I fought against him. Mademoiselle, you are honored in your ancestry."

"I have always known that, sir," answered the young woman, proudly, "my father, Comte Honoré de Vaudémont, Capitaine de Vaisseau, was recently beheaded by the Republicans. My grandfather and his servant — our one remaining servant, monsieur — got my brother and myself out of La Conciergerie. We were escaping

from France. This ruined tower belonged to the de Vaudémonts, it is the last of our possessions. A captain of the French Navy, formerly an insubordinate sailor whom my grandfather once punished, followed us here. We have held the tower until to-day. You came at the right moment, messieurs. My father fought against the English. We do not love them, but I am not unmindful that we owe our lives to you."

"I am not an Englishman, comtesse," returned the young man, promptly.

"How, monsieur! You are—"

"An Irishman, mademoiselle."

"'Tis the same thing, sir."

"Sure an' if you said that in Ireland, God bless her, you'd find that it wasn't at all!" replied Macartney with a smile upon his handsome face. "Some day I should be happy to prove it to you," he added audaciously, but fortunately she did not comprehend. She had other things to think of then, anyway.

"Monsieur, is there a surgeon with you?" she asked eagerly.

"Yes, on the beach attending to some of our men who were wounded."

"I should like him to look at my grandfather."

"Certainly, mademoiselle. Mr. Nisbett! Pass the word for Dr. Scott to come here as soon as he can."

"Now, Macartney," said the captain, who had been a silent but fidgety spectator, "what has this amazingly pretty girl been saying to you? I have been studying French for five years, and, damn me, I can't make out

more than half a dozen words in an hour's conversation! What's all this ruction about, anyway? Who are these people and what do they want? We can't stay here all day, you know. I believe the sight of a petticoat would make men forget — "

The young girl's face flushed a beautiful crimson at this blunt speech from the captain of the *Agamemnon*.

"Monsieur," she said to Macartney in French, staring at the little captain, "who is this person?"

"'This person,'" laughed the lieutenant, "has the honor to be the captain of the ship that has had the good fortune to rescue you."

"Sir," said the young woman in perfect English, turning to Nelson as she spoke, "I do not love the English, but I speak their language. I thank you, sir — I understand all you said — I thank you for the compliment you have paid me. 'Tis evidently as sincere as it is frank."

Nelson flushed like a schoolboy as he bowed with much embarrassment.

"I wonder," he muttered to himself, "why a man will be such a fool as to be certain that no one speaks his language but himself. Mademoiselle," he said aloud, "I speak truly, though I did not intend — ah — in short, I am glad to have been of service to you. Ah, Dr. Scott, there is a wounded man upstairs — a French naval officer. Do what you can for him. Now, mademoiselle, what can we do for you?"

"We desire to escape from this place. Can you take us away on your ship?"

"By Jove, sir, she'll be after having the whole ship's company in love with her if you do!" said Macartney, under his breath.

"Certainly I can and will," answered Nelson, promptly.

"And will you land us in Italy?"

"Not that, I am afraid."

"Whither are you bound, sir?"

"Toulon."

"Toulon!"

"Yes. Have you not heard? Toulon has declared for King Louis XVII and the Regent. An English fleet under Vice-admiral Lord Hood has already taken possession of the harbor. The *Agamemnon*, my ship yonder, is a part of that fleet. You will be perfectly safe there. Hullo! What's this?"

"This" was the silent Brébœuf supporting in his arms the slighter form of the marquis. Fortunately the old man had sustained no permanent injury. His head, which had been badly cut, was bound in a cloth. He looked a little paler than usual and had lost much blood, but was quite his vivacious imperturbable self again.

"This," whispered Macartney, "will be the Marquis de Vaudémont. The French vice-admiral, you know, sir."

"Oh, I see," returned Nelson, *sotto vôce*, "a shipmate of de Suffren, you said, and he was one of the few great seamen that France has produced. Sir," he said in English to the marquis, "do you understand the English language?"

"I do, sir," answered the marquis, speaking with no less precision than his granddaughter. "I have learned the English tongue from the lips of women and the defiance of men. I have heard the language spoken by your guns."

"You gave as good as we sent, sir," said Nelson, politely. Like most English seamen of his time, collectively he hated the French, individually many of them won his respect and affection. "I am honored at meeting such a distinguished officer of the Royal Marine of France. My ship is at your service. I am Captain Nelson. We are going to Toulon —"

"Toulon!" exclaimed the noble.

"Yes. Do you not know? It has declared for your King."

"Thank God that loyalty is not everywhere dead in France!" exclaimed the marquis.

"Lord Hood with a fleet of twenty-two English ships-of-the-line and Vice-admiral de Langara with seventeen Spanish are in the harbor. The Republicans are besieging it, but the place is impregnable. Shall we have the honor of taking you there?"

"Indeed, yes. I could ask nothing better than this — to be in a position to strike a blow for King Louis XVII, God bless him!"

"How many are in your party, sir?"

"What you see, Captain Nelson. My granddaughter, the Comtesse de Vaudémont" — Nelson bowed deferentially, while the comtesse dropped him a sweeping courtesy — "her foster-sister, my servant Brébœuf, and —"

He lifted his voice — "Honoré, you may withdraw from your post now. My grandson, Comte Honoré de Vaudémont, Captain Nelson," he continued, as the boy made his appearance. "My son has died like his King, on the scaffold a few weeks since, sir."

"I gathered as much," said Nelson, lifting his hat. "Sir, you have my sympathy. Yet 'tis a brave death."

"Thank you," said the marquis, gravely. "His Majesty did not lack gentlemen to bear him company even to the guillotine."

"Monsieur," interrupted his granddaughter, "this gentleman led the attacking party which rescued us. His name is — "

"Robert Macartney, Monsieur le Marquis," answered Macartney in his perfect French, "an English naval officer, first lieutenant on the *Agamemnon*, but, harkee, born an Irishman, sir."

"There have been many Irish gentlemen in the Marine of France, sir," said the marquis, smiling.

"Yes, monsieur. You will always find them where there is fighting and love-making going on."

"There will be plenty of fighting but little of the latter in France, sir," said the marquis. "I am pleased to make your acquaintance, sir."

"Ay, Macartney," said Nelson, who was following the conversation but with some difficulty, "you did the thing handsomely. I was simply a volunteer, my lord. I did not interfere with his plans. I shall report his actions to Lord Hood at Toulon. Now, sir, have you anything to take with you?"

"Only these portmanteaux," said the marquis, pointing to his mails.

"Macartney, will you see them safely aboard the boats? This way, sir." He offered the old man his hand.

"Mademoiselle," said Macartney, after directing some of his blue-jackets to take the luggage, "allow me." He offered her his hand, which she instantly accepted. "Fighting in France," he murmured half to himself as they descended the stairs, "there's sure to be that in plenty. Love-making in France," he continued, "well, I am not so certain as to that, but if I know anything about it there'll be plenty on the *Agamemnon* and Robert Macartney will do his share."

When they arrived on the little stretch of sand Captain Nelson called Macartney to him and after a brief conversation in a low tone that officer despatched one of his boats to the ship in advance of the other two with a command to Berry the ranking officer left on board. It took some little time to complete the preparations for embarking the party. There were two or three wounded English seamen and one poor fellow who had been shot dead by the French who had to be carefully arranged for.

Bidding Macartney turn over the command of the two remaining cutters to Lieutenant Frazier, the *Agamemnon's* fourth, who had accompanied the expedition, the captain took the vice-admiral, his grandson and granddaughter and Macartney in the stern sheets of his gig, which had been sent to the shore after

him. Brébœuf and Aurore, with the marquis' baggage, found room forward in one of the cutters. The two cutters stopped a short distance from the shore, and the marines they carried presented their pieces and covered the departure of the gig, which was the last boat to leave the foot of the tower. The Republicans had been so thoroughly surprised and had suffered such a severe loss, taken in connection with Brébœuf's lucky shot which had broken Garron's arm, that the party was permitted to embark unmolested.

As the gig slowly made its way to the ship in the wake of the other boats, the marquis stared silently back toward the shore. Accustomed as he was and as was his class to conceal the deepest emotions in an affectation of nonchalance and indifference, no one but his granddaughter realized his feelings as he quitted Provence and his ancestral home, at least all that was left of that domain which his people had enjoyed so long. He was leaving it forever, and some premonition of that fact seemed to weigh upon him. He sat in a deep revery, with his eyes fixed upon the old tower which had so nearly witnessed the extinction of his race. Nelson, with his feminine quickness of perception, comprehended everything that was passing in his guest's mind and at first forbore to disturb him.

The Republicans had seized the tower when they could safely do so, and as the old man gazed upon it a thin column of smoke curled above the broken parapet whence before their departure young Honoré had taken the cherished flag.

"The villains have set fire to the tower at last," said the little captain, following the other's glance, and breaking the silence that was becoming somewhat uncomfortable; "was it yours, my lord?"

"The last holding of my house. 'Tis a poor remnant of former ease and comfort, yet it sheltered me well in time of need," answered the marquis, slowly.

"I will have a few shot thrown among them when we reach the ship. Perhaps that will stop them."

"Not so, sir," said the marquis. "Leave it to the fire. I had rather it were consumed in the flames than that it should give shelter to the enemies of France."

"Yet they are French, marquis," said Nelson, curiously.

"They are the enemies of the King, and with me, sir, the King is France."

The little captain bowed his head; that was a creed he could understand.

By this time the gig shot alongside the accommodation ladder, which had been hastily rigged for the convenience of the women, and Nelson motioned to the marquis to precede him to the deck. The officers, in full-dress uniforms, wearing swords, were lined up abaft the gangway; the seamen stood at quarters in the waist; on the quarter-deck the marines were drawn up in orderly ranks. The boatswain and his mates with a full complement of side-boys stood ready to receive the marquis. As he set foot on the deck, touching his hat to the flag, the boatswain and his mates trilled their silver calls — piping the side, the

ceremony was called — the marines presented arms, the drums ruffled, and forward the first gun of a vice-admiral's salute went thundering over the still waters of the bay. Nelson, through Macartney, had given orders to Berry that the old admiral was to be received with every ceremony befitting his rank, and this was the result.

The face of the old man beamed with pleasure. His lassitude and languor vanished. He was really startled out of his indifference. He held himself very straight, stepped proudly, and brought his thin white old hand to his chapeau as an acknowledgment of the handsome salute. His other hand instinctively fastened itself upon the hilt of his sword. It was a pretty scene and the little attention touched the old sailor deeply. He sniffed the rolling cloud of smoke and the acrid familiar smell of the burning powder with animation and pleasure.

"Sir," he said, turning to Nelson, whose fine eyes and mobile countenance reflected the pleasure in the face of his guest, "this is most handsome of you — to receive me, an old man, an exile, an officer without a commission, with all the honors of my rank and station. I shall tell my King, if please God I ever see him again. I never thought I should tread the deck of a war-ship like this."

"Sir," replied Nelson, bowing, "you are very welcome to the *Agamemnon*. England pays homage to valor and courage even in the person of her enemies. I should like nothing better, sir, than to meet you in a

different guise, with your flag flying at the head of a brave squadron, and I, if so be I should ever attain the rank, with one to match, that we might try the wager of battle as our forefathers have done."

The eyes of the marquis flashed. He threw back his head.

"You could wish me no better wish, Sir Englishman, than that."

"But for the present," went on Nelson, "we are allies. The ship is yours, sir. Gentlemen," he added, turning to his officers, "I present you to the companion of Admiral de Suffren, Vice-admiral de Vaudémont, of the Royal Navy of France."

"Don't forget the young lady, sir," whispered Macartney, who stood close by.

No one was more beloved by his subordinates and no one ever permitted his subordinates more liberty without in the least impairing either their efficiency or their discipline than Nelson. Therefore Macartney spoke without hesitation.

"Certainly," said Nelson. "And, gentlemen, allow me to present you to the Comtesse de Vaudémont and Comte Honoré de Vaudémont her brother, with your permission, Admiral. I said, mademoiselle, that the ship was your grandfather's, but in truth, if I know anything about it, if I am able to estimate the probable opinions of my officers, I am afraid you will be in command rather than either of us. We are all at your service."

The young woman courtesied deeply while the gentle-

men of the ship bowed profoundly before her. Her appearance indeed created much more of a sensation than that of the marquis. Those brave sailors could see vice-admirals any day. A woman like Louise de Vaudémont was a rarity at any time. Nelson spoke truly. From the moment she stepped upon the deck the whole ship with its officers and men would belong to her and her only.

"Three cheers, men!" cried Macartney at this juncture, "for Vice-admiral de Vaudémont!"

Then might be witnessed the unusual sight of the men on a British ship cheering an officer of her ancient enemy. Nelson smiled as the cheer ended in a tiger, and then invited the marquis and his granddaughter to share his cabin.

"Mr. Nisbett," he said to that young man, "my stepson, Admiral," he continued, "will take care of the young comte in the steerage. He will be happier there, I imagine, than in the cabin. Your servant will quarter with you. Swing the main-yard, Mr. Macartney, and set the watch. My lord, I hope to land you at Toulon by day after to-morrow at the furthest."

Book II

TOULON

CHAPTER VII

THE FAMILY OF DE VAUDÉMONT

THE family of de Vaudémont, like that of de Barras, was as old as the rocks of Provence; yet they were not originally of that section of France. When the beautiful and charming Louise de Vaudémont married King Henri III, the last of the Valois, that monarch had, as was natural in view of his marital ties, extended his fortunes to various members of the family of his devoted wife. That she was devoted to Henri III shows that there was some good after all in that poor miserable simulacrum of a king. That he chose her from many others for his wife also confirms that supposition.

Among the younger branches of the family which he distinguished with his royal favor was one upon which high rank was eventually bestowed and to which large domains were granted in the extreme southeastern corner of France, in the county of Provence, said favors being conferred for loyal devotion and corresponding services. It was from this sept that the present marquis sprang. In the course of years the other branches of the family had all died out. Henri and Louise had no children, and by degrees all the honors, prescribed and otherwise, of the noble and princely de Vaudémonts fell to the Provençal branch.

Living in sight and sound of the sea the de Vaudémonts had gradually elected to bear arms in the service of the King in the Navy of France. From father to son for several generations they had been sailors. The traditional policy of France had long been antagonistic to England. None felt that antagonism more bitterly than those who fought her on the sea. In the long roll of maritime engagements France had generally suffered at the hands of her rivals. Once in a while, however, a great French sea captain rose and by his talents turned the wavering scale of battle the other way.

Among such men was the Bailli de Suffren, Vice-admiral of France. His campaign, for by that term it is usually described, in the East Indies in 1782, against Sir Edward Hughes, in which he outsailed, outgeneralled and outfought his English antagonist in no less than five distinct desperate and bloody battles, stands almost unique in the history of naval warfare. It placed de Suffren at the very summit of his profession in any navy. Had he survived until the Revolution, and had he consented to assume command of the French fleet, some chapters of history, almost unthinkable otherwise, might have had to be rewritten.

One of his greatest captains, the best of them, had been the Marquis de Vaudémont. Indeed the success of de Suffren had been largely due to the able seconding he received from this, his most trusted subordinate. This had been recognized at court; and upon the untimely death of the great seaman ten years before, de

Vaudémont, who had already been promoted to be a rear-admiral, was made de Suffren's successor as vice-admiral of the Royal Navy of France, the rank he at present enjoyed.

The long period of peace had given the Marquis de Vaudémont no opportunity of distinguishing himself. The Revolution had found him, as could scarcely have been otherwise, a stanch and devoted adherent of the King. He had been stripped of his dignities and rank by the Republic; he had been proscribed and condemned to death. Fortunately his place of concealment was not discovered by his enemies. His vast estates had been confiscated, his hotel in Paris and his château at Vaudémont had been sacked and gutted, and he found himself in his old age an outlaw, and practically a penniless exile at that.

These were not the worst of his misfortunes. In the frightful days of the Septembrists, after the death of the King, his son, Capitaine de Vaisseau in the Royal Navy, had been arrested, found guilty of being concerned in a plot to rescue Queen Marie Antoinette, and had been promptly guillotined. Returning to Paris in disguise the old vice-admiral had risked his life in vain efforts to save his son. He had succeeded, through the expenditure of the last vestige of means that remained to him from the wreck of his once magnificent fortune, in securing the liberty of his granddaughter and grandson. By the aid of Brébœuf and Aurore he had hurried these two young people from Paris to the coast of Provence, where he had

arranged a boat should meet him which should convey his party to Italy, then in the grasp of the Austrian armies at war with the Republic.

One Jean Garron, a former peasant on the marquis' estate, who had followed his master's fortunes on the sea, and who had proved himself a reckless, insubordinate, not to be trusted sailor, and whom the marquis had caused to be well flogged at the gangway on occasion, had espoused the cause of the Republic; and, as he was a man of some ability and courage and utterly without bowels of compassion, he had speedily made himself an important member of the famous Jacobin party, which at that time swayed the destinies of France. He had actually been a member of the convention which had sentenced and executed the King.

On account of his previous sea service he had subsequently sought and received an appointment in the French Navy as captain, a post he was totally unfitted in any way to fill. In that situation, however, he was not alone. All the ranking officers of the old French Navy belonged to the nobility. Almost without exception they had resigned their commissions and had fled the country. The Republic was obliged to find officers where it could.

Garron was the most bitter and unscrupulous persecutor of the family of the marquis. He pursued them partly because of his intense hatred of the old man, but more for another reason. He had conceived a passion for the beautiful daughter of the house and wanted to marry her. His wooing, as we have seen, had been a

rough one, and he had totally failed up to the present. He was an indomitable man, however, and had not even yet despaired.

The political party which at first dominated the Revolution had been the Girondists. They were not sufficiently violent to suit the Jacobins, however, and the latter constantly growing stronger had assumed the reins of government by forcibly dispossessing the Girondists and putting many of them to death. Robespierre and Danton were in control of the Jacobins.

Against the excesses of these inhuman monsters the Girondists revolted. Lyons, Marseilles, and Toulon espoused their cause. By the middle of 1793 the whole of Provence was in rebellion against the convention. Indeed there was an earnest desire among the politicians of that county to cut themselves off from Jacobin France and make a separate Republic out of ancient Provence.

The Royalists, seizing the opportunity, made common cause with the Girondists in the rebellion against the Republic, trusting that events might so shape themselves that the son of Louis XVI, who was then dragging out a miserable and pitiable existence under the brutal restraints of the convention, might be proclaimed King. With Provence and La Vendée an important section of France would be gained to their cause.

The Jacobins had not been idle. Lyons had been overwhelmed by the Republican force after a vigorous and desperate defence, and the convention had decreed that it should be razed to the ground, that a pillar

should be erected bearing this significant legend, "*Lyons opposed liberty, Lyons is no more!*" Marseilles had also been taken, and after its capture the Republic had been disgraced by wholesale butcheries and massacres of the most atrocious character. Toulon and La Vendée still held out.

Toulon was the greatest naval depot in France. Within its capacious basins were assembled thirty odd ships-of-the-line, the flower of the French Navy, with many frigates, store-ships, transports, etc. It was defended by formidable fortifications which enclosed docks, storehouses, shipyards, and all the components of a great naval establishment. Its harbor was inaccessible to an enemy from the sea. It was equally difficult of access from the landward side on account of the mountainous character of the surrounding country. The Republican army, flushed by its triumphs and massacres at Lyons and Marseilles, had advanced against it and had invested it, whereupon those who had assumed authority within its walls promptly notified Lord Hood, the English commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean, to come to their succor and take possession of the town in the name of the King of France.

England and France had been at war since February. Hood, who was one of the great naval captains of the age, instantly availed himself of this invitation. As practically the whole civilized world was in arms against the Republic, his own fleet of over fifty sail, including twenty-three of the line, was presently reënforced in

the harbor of Toulon by seventeen Spanish and five Neapolitan ships-of-the-line. A large garrison of regular troops from the English, Spanish, and Neapolitan forces was hastily thrown into the place and preparations made for an active defence.

Nelson, possessing in the *Agamemnon* one of the fastest of the capital ships, had been sent to the Neapolitan Court to ask soldiers for the garrison and was returning from that errand when he fell in with the marquis and his party.

Affairs in France were in a state of hopeless confusion. Dumouriez, by his lucky victory at Jemappes in the north, had temporarily saved her from invasion, but all the European nations in arms were gathering menacingly upon her every frontier.

There had as yet risen no force, or power, or individual strong enough to unify, control, and direct that magnificent patriotism and enthusiasm for the new Republican ideas which, even though exhibited sporadically heretofore, had as yet sufficed to keep the nation above water in all the peril attendant upon the unanimous antagonisms of the nations of Europe.

The forces besieging Toulon had been commanded in succession by a painter, Carteaux; by a doctor, Doppet; and at present by a veteran soldier, Dugommier, who had not the slightest spark of military genius in his composition. He had invested the place on the landward side in the old-fashioned way, and with the allies in command of the sea he could have remained there forever without effecting anything. The situation was

satisfactory enough for Dugommier from any point of view, for by doing nothing he at least saved his head. If he risked a battle and lost it — well, the convention had an abrupt habit of sentencing a general in that position to death. Dugommier's natural caution therefore was accentuated by these untoward conditions.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LAST HOPE OF THE ROYALISTS

Two days after the affair in the tower de Bolléne in October, 1793, the *Agamemnon*, under the influence of the flood-tide and a gentle breeze, slowly moved up the harbor of Toulon to her anchorage. Toulon possesses one of the best natural harbors in the world. A long peninsula extending westward from the mainland for about three miles encloses the Great Road with its entrance to the eastward about a mile wide. At the west end of the peninsula a rocky projection meeting a similar promontory from the main shore diminishes the width of the bay to less than half a mile. Within these promontories the Inner or Little Road expands again to the width of a league. The shape of the whole body of water, roughly speaking, is that of an hour-glass. At the upper end of the inner bay lies the fortified city of Toulon. The outer and inner roads were filled with shipping.

The batteries of the besiegers had been extended to enclose the shores of the bay on either side of the city and harbor. Opposite the two points of land separating the outer and inner roads, on reefs and piles of rock in the water, had been erected formidable works to command the channel at its narrowest opening: Forts

Balaguier and L'Éguillette on the southern projection, Forts La Malgue and St. Louis on the northern. Back of Fort Balaguier, upon the mainland, which here rose from the water in precipitate hills, the English had erected a series of heavy earthworks facing the French lines, which they called Fort Mulgrave, to prevent the neck of the hour-glass with its forts from being seized by the Republicans. The opposing army well provided with guns kept up a constant fire upon the defenders of Toulon, to which the garrison, also lacking nothing, made equally vigorous response. The scene as the *Agamemnon's* movements brought it in view was an exciting and magnificent picture of war.

"There, my lord," said Captain Nelson, pointing toward Fort Mulgrave as the *Agamemnon* slowly swept up the channel, "is the key of Toulon."

"Evidently," said the vice-admiral.

"When we arrived," continued Nelson, "there were no fortifications to speak of there, on the landward side, that is, and the forts covering the channel might easily have been seized had there been any military talent in the opposing army."

"The people," said the marquis, "of France are still French and therefore brave, although the forcible and temporary severance of their allegiance to the King and nobility has greatly impaired their fighting capacity; but there is no military leadership among them apparently. The people are all very well — if kept in their places. You cannot take a peasant or a private and make a general of him by giving him command,

any more than you can take a common sailor and turn him into an admiral by putting an epaulet on his shoulder," continued the old man, loftily. "I am not at all surprised that they allowed you to seize and fortify that point."

"They seem to be disputing its possession now, however," said Nelson, lifting a glass and looking toward the shore. "There are a line of batteries around it and they are hotly engaged. See, my lord, they hold their position in spite of the English ships in Lazaret Roads! That battery nearest Fort Balaguier must be a desperate position to keep, enfiladed as it is by the fire of yonder frigate."

Admiral Hood had disposed his available ships, those which were sufficiently light in draught to allow them to approach near to the shore, in such a way that they reënforced every fort and covered every point. Ships' batteries in addition to those in the town were blazing on every hand all the time, and the promontory they were besieging was surrounded with frigates whose broadsides gave most efficient aid to the shore batteries.

Captain Nelson was not alone in his opinion of the importance of Fort Mulgrave, or the promontory on which it stood, which the English had made so formidable that they facetiously christened it "Little Gibraltar." There was one officer in the French army, a mere boy in years, who, at a council of war held a short time before, had put his finger upon that very spot on the map and had remarked to the veterans with whom he happened to be associated in the council by a fortui-

tous chance, because he was the only trained artillerist with the Republican army, that there was the key to Toulon. He had pointed out that they might assail the walls forever and in vain, but if they once got possession of that point the harbor would be untenable, for guns on the promontory would command every portion of the harbor, the allied fleets would be forced to withdraw, and the town would fall at once.

Dugommier and the commissioners of the convention, who were there to see that everybody did his full duty to the Republic, were struck by the prescience of the young officer. Their attention had at once been directed to Fort Mulgrave. A few days before the arrival of the *Agamemnon*, on the thirtieth of November, seeing that the French were approaching perilously near to the works, General O'Hara had made a dashing sortie from Fort Mulgrave, which had been gallantly repulsed, and in the retreat the English commander had been captured with many of his men. The young artillery captain had had two horses shot under him and had been severely wounded in this action, but fortunately for France he survived the sortie, and the attack upon Fort Mulgrave was thereafter pressed with more determination than ever.

He was a resourceful man, this young captain. When he planted a battery on the extreme flank of his position to take Fort Balaguier and the English lines in reverse, it was found that those who manned the guns there were in imminent danger from the enfilading fire of the frigate reënforcing the works. This was the

battery to which Nelson had just called attention. The young artillery captain hit upon the happy expedient of naming the work which was so difficult to maintain and so dangerous to its garrison, the "Battery of the Fearless!" Consequently he was overwhelmed with volunteers for the guns who wanted to prove their courage at that very point.

The *Agamemnon* swung into the inner harbor to the berth pointed out to her by one of the scouting boats, dropped anchor, and Captain Nelson, accompanied by the French vice-admiral, his guest, repaired to the *Victory*, the flagship of Lord Hood, the one to report and the other to pay his respects to the English commander. Thereafter the marquis and his party were landed by the *Agamemnon's* boat at the principal quay of the harbor. Macartney had charge of the boat.

No one on the *Agamemnon* had made much progress, in the two days that had elapsed since she came aboard, in the acquaintance of the comtesse. Indeed, the girl had scarcely been visible. The recent death of her father, the great peril she had so narrowly escaped, the shock she had sustained in the knowledge that such a man as Garron had actually aspired to her hand, had unnerved her. When to this was added an animosity to the English far more unreasoning and more bitter — for it was the causeless antagonism of youth — than that of her grandfather, it is easy to see why she kept to herself, to the great disappointment of the young sailors of the *Agamemnon*.

Macartney was a seasoned officer of thirty years of

age, neither better nor worse than men of his class. He had followed the sea since he was ten years old, and was expecting every day his promotion to a frigate. He had had love affairs without number. His sweethearts were scattered from India to Quebec. There were so many of them that he had forgotten their very names and even what they looked like. Sometimes when a letter reached him he had to cudgel his brains to think who "Mary" or "Jessie" or "Isabel" might be!

A penniless Irishman of good but poverty-stricken family, and nothing else, he had risen from cabin boy to first lieutenant by merit alone. Had it not been for a streak of reckless audacity and a native impatience of restraint, which sometimes caused him to break out in different ways, he would have been a captain long since. In his love affairs he had always been confident that each successive woman to whom he pledged his heart was the affinity provided for him by the immortal gods. But in the case of Louise de Vaudémont it seemed to him that it was different. The fickle Irishman fell in love frequently and easily and always at first sight. He had done it before and, therefore, he had no difficulty in recognizing the symptoms when Louise de Vaudémont swept into his empty and — for the time being — ungarnished heart. Yet in this instance he felt that something was changed. Other instances had not affected him quite this way, if his memory served him.

He had heard the story of Garron's proposition. He realized from what he had saved the girl. To be sure

Nelson and the ship's company might lay claim to a share of that salvage as well as he, but he also realized that he was the man who would undoubtedly get the credit for it in her eyes, for he was the man who was there. It was his dispositions that had made the attack successful, and it was to him that its success was due. Of course if he had made any mistake, Captain Nelson would have interfered, but he had not made any. He instinctively felt that when the comtesse thought about the situation she would give the honor to him.

Macartney was a gallant and handsome officer, with Irish blue eyes full of merriment and tenderness on occasion, with curly dark brown hair, with a mouth whose jolly laughing curves did not conceal his decision and courage. He was a tall, broad-shouldered, powerful fellow, as light on his feet as a cat, and in every respect the antithesis of his little captain, to whom, by the way, he was blindly and devotedly attached.

Like all those who came in contact with him, Macartney expected much of that little captain in the future, and his expectations, as we shall see, were not doomed to disappointment. What the little captain of artillery was destined to be on the land, that the little captain of the *Agamemnon* was to be on the sea. The greatest drama in all human history was that which was played between the two. Men have lost sight, comparatively speaking, of the little captain of the sea in contemplation of the greater glory of the

little captain of the shore; but had it not been for the little captain of the sea, in at least two crucial moments in the lives of both men, the history of the world would have been changed, and for the worse.

Macartney was deeply disappointed, more so than any of the others, at his inability to see much of the comtesse. When he did see her on the short voyage she was never alone. The marquis or the taciturn and saturnine Brébœuf or the pert and voluble Aurore were always at hand. Indeed, Brébœuf seemed to think that his special duty consisted in watching over the young woman. He had come into the service of the de Vaudémonts in attendance upon the daughter-in-law of the old marquis. He was an ancient retainer of the family of de Croisic of Morbihan, and when Mademoiselle Louise de Croisic was married to the young Captain de Vaudémont, Brébœuf, who had known her from a child, came with her to Provence. Madame de Vaudémont shared her husband's love of the sea, and her daughter, strange to say, had been born on a ship.

"You have no fear of the sea," Macartney had said to his fair young charge as they approached the *Agamemnon* for the first time.

"Fear!" exclaimed the girl. "Monsieur, the de Vaudémonts fear nothing but God." The simplicity with which she made this doughty declaration robbed it of its arrogance. "And I," she continued, gravely, "was born on a frigate."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed the young Irishman.

"Monsieur, it is certain. My mother had been visiting in Brittany. She had gone there on my father's ship. When they embarked for Vaudémont that I might be born in my father's château, the ship was caught in a storm. They were forced to run before it miles to seaward. It was a long weary beat back to the Mediterranean and I was born on the sea, under the flag of France, in the midst of a storm."

"The blue ocean's daughter," murmured the young man, delighted at this confession.

"Yes, monsieur," said the girl, smiling faintly. "I love a ship. When I was a child, before I was sent to the convent in Paris, my father took me with him on many a cruise. My mother died when my brother was born and we were much with our father when we were children. I can steer a ship; I have often — monsieur will scarcely believe it — been over the crosstrees."

"You are the very wife for a sailor, mademoiselle," said the Irishman, boldly.

The girl was too little used to society, too innocent, to realize what the man had said.

"I shall be wife to no one," she answered gravely. "I live for my grandfather, for my King, for France."

"'Tis a brave resolution, mademoiselle," answered the young sailor, awed for the moment by the solemnity of her remarks. "But 'tis one," he added under his breath, "that you will never keep." And by all the laws of war he resolved that he would do his best to compel her to break it.

But fortune had given him no opportunity, nor had all his ability availed to enable him to create one before reaching Toulon. He did not see her a moment alone until they stood on the quay ready to separate. The advent of the marquis, an officer of rank and station and reputation, had been of the utmost importance to the notables and garrison of the town. The intimate friend of the Comte de Provence, the Regent of the boy King, Louis XVII, languishing to his death under the brutal tutelage of Simon at Paris, he had been welcomed with eagerness as a most valuable auxiliary to the defence. Quarters had been found for him and his grandchildren, and they were all heartily received by the Royalists of the town. The vice-admiral was soon busily greeting his old friends and acquaintances at the landing. Honoré, whose devotion to his grandfather amounted to idolatry, stood close by his side. Brébœuf was attending to the luggage, and Aurore was lost in admiration of the brilliant scene on the quay.

Macartney and Louise were alone for the moment.

"Mademoiselle," said the young man, eagerly, "I have had no opportunity to speak to you alone, scarcely even to see you, for a moment. I want to see more of you. May I not?" he went on ingenuously.

"To what purpose, monsieur?"

"Does one ask why one wants to see the roses in bloom, or why one longs to hear the birds sing, mademoiselle?"

"Roses do not bloom and birds do not sing for those who love their King in France to-day."

"Ah, there you are wrong, mademoiselle," returned the Irishman, confidently. "You may kill the King and subvert the government; you may change the orderly course of events in whatever way you will, with whatever consequences personal or otherwise; but roses will bloom and birds will sing, if nowhere else, in human hearts. May I not come to see you?"

"To what end, monsieur?" asked the girl once more. "I am for France."

"Just that I may look upon you. We sailors are shut off from half the joys of life that womankind can bring, and —"

"You must not talk so."

"I will say nothing if you will only give me leave to come."

"You saved my life, monsieur," said the girl, slowly at last. "Perhaps more than my life" — she shuddered at the thought of Garron — "and I owe you much. I would not seem ungracious, as I am not ungrateful. If my grandfather permits, you may come. But I will be frank with you. It seems unkind, perhaps, but the truth is usually so, I am told. I do not love the English people. I wish any other had saved me than yourself."

Macartney was too wise to argue.

"Quite so, mademoiselle, and as I told you once before, I beg you to remember that I am not an Englishman, but an Irishman."

"And as I said once before, 'tis the same thing."

"Give me leave, mademoiselle, and I shall be able to prove to you that it is very different."

"Comtesse," said the vice-admiral, turning.

The girl smiled frankly, extending her hand to Macartney. He bent low over it and kissed it, after a fashion already disappearing from France, and there was a fervor and a passion in his touch that, in spite of herself, thrilled the recipient of the courtesy.

"My compliments to your captain, Monsieur Macartney," continued the marquis, "if I mistake not we shall hear of him some day. He knows his ship; there is a temper in him like that in a Toledo blade. The *hôtel* which has been placed at my disposal in the town is open to him, to you, and to your officers. We hope to see you there. We owe you much. *Au revoir.*"

"Thank you, my lord," said Macartney, delighted at the invitation. "Be sure that I shall come, sir." Then he whispered to Louise, "You hear? I may come, then?"

"Come," whispered the girl, turning away, leaving him enraptured on the quay.

CHAPTER IX

AMID FLAME AND SMOKE

On the night of the 16th of November, the weather being cold and rainy, the wind blowing great guns, the Republicans, led by the young captain of artillery, who, in spite of his low rank, was the animating spirit of the offence, captured Fort Mulgrave by storm. Forts L'Éguilette and Balaguier were rendered untenable by this bold operation. They had not been built for defence against attack from the landward side.

Fort Mulgrave was not taken without a desperate struggle, in which the frigates and ships near the shore all participated. At the same time furious attacks were made upon Forts Malbosquet and La Malgue on the other side of the harbor, and upon various points on the walls. The assailants made good use of the advantage they had gained in the seizure of "Little Gibraltar," which was hardly worthy its name after all, for they promptly turned the heavy guns of the fort, which were reënforced by those from the "Battery of the Fearless" and other encompassing works, upon the allied ships in the harbor. The promontory, under the artillery captain's skilful dispositions, soon bristled with guns, and by morning a rain of bullets swept the outer and inner roads.

Hood and Langara at first endeavored to overwhelm it by the fire of their heavy ships-of-the-line, but without avail. As the young artillery captain had said, that promontory was the key to Toulon. It was soon recognized that with that point of vantage in the possession of the enemy, the harbor would have to be abandoned. To retake it was plainly impossible. There was no help for it, they had to go, nor could they stand upon the order of their going.

The decision to withdraw which had thus been forced upon the English admiral was at once communicated to the people of the town. From a state of easy and confident security, the helpless inhabitants immediately passed into a condition of the direst apprehension and alarm. The fate of Lyons, the horrible massacres at Marseilles, were known to every one. The resistance of Toulon had been more desperate than had been that of the other two cities. Toulon had committed the last affront against the French Republic by admitting the English to its harbor. There was no hope but that the vengeance to be meted out to it would be more terrible than that which had been visited upon any other spot in France which had taken arms against the Republic.

In the harbor, mostly laid up in ordinary, tied up along the wharves, or in the dockyards, were thirty-one magnificent ships-of-the-line, besides twelve frigates and many smaller ships. Four had been seized, loaded with French prisoners, and sent away to Rochefort by the English admiral. Many of Hood's cap-

tains, Nelson being chief among them, had advised that the remaining French ships should be burned so soon as the allies had taken possession of the harbor, but Lord Hood's position had been an extremely delicate one. Toulon had practically declared for the King. The English and Spanish were at war with the French Republic. They had no quarrel with the King of France. In entering Toulon and reënforcing it, they were actually succoring the King against the Republicans. To have destroyed the ships there would have been to destroy the navy of the King, for being in Toulon the ships naturally passed out of the control of the Republicans in spite of the opposition of Rear-admiral St. Julien, the friend of Garron, a Republican who had strenuously objected to the admission of the English. Admiral Langara had also vigorously protested against any destruction of the ships, on the ground mentioned. The French Royalists in Toulon, and especially the old Marquis de Vaudémont, a sea officer of long experience who loved the ships, had added their representations to those of the Spanish commander.

In the embarrassing situation Hood had felt that he could do no less than respect the pleas of his allies and the Royalists, but when it became necessary to abandon Toulon after the Republican success in seizing the promontory, the situation was entirely changed; for to leave the ships intact was to hand them over to the Republican government. No objection could be made therefore either by the allies or the Royalists to the orders which he issued for their destruction.

What could have been accomplished thoroughly and without difficulty at leisure had perforce to be done imperfectly and inadequately in the haste of embarkation. The ships were getting the worst of the encounter with the batteries on the shore with every passing hour. The Republicans, encouraged by their brilliant success, and with the guns of the jutting promontory enfilading the shores on either side, had rushed their batteries to the very edge of the bluffs overlooking the roads. The vessels immediately had been driven from the places whence they had been enabled to pour such annoying fire upon the French. The passage between the outer and inner roads became a zone of fire. There was no time to be lost if the fleets were to be saved. Hood and Langara offered to receive on the ships as many people as they could carry, or at least as many as could get aboard in the short period that remained before their departure.

Macartney had been promoted a short time before to the command of a captured forty-gun frigate, formerly *La Topaze*, but which had been renamed the *Inconstant*, and he was ordered to attend to the burning of the French ships. In this he was assisted by a number of officers and men detailed from different ships in the fleet, and by several English and Spanish gunboats. The detachment was provided with a number of captured vessels of small size, to be used as fireships.

Meanwhile the embarkation of the Royalists proceeded with frantic haste. Boat after boat left the crowded quays and wharves loaded to the gunwales

with frightened people. The ships-of-the-line, the frigates, the transports, were crowded with soldiers of the garrison and with the terrified inhabitants of the town. One by one, as they were filled, they weighed anchor, and left the harbor, running a gantlet of the fire from the batteries as they passed out to sea.

Macartney's state of mind can scarcely be imagined. He had a duty to perform of the greatest importance. There was no way, even had he so desired, by which he could either evade it or devolve it upon some one else. The most important thing to be done in connection with the evacuation was to see that no French ship was left seaworthy for the Republic. To attend to that duty required that he should devote himself to it with every particle of skill, address, and courage that he possessed. Indeed, as he was the ranking officer of the men engaged in the task he might be considered as being vital to the success of the endeavor. Whatever he felt or thought he went about it in a businesslike way too.

There were in Toulon a number of Republicans who had been restrained from exploiting their political views by the overwhelming preponderance of Royalists and Girondists who had made common cause. They belonged chiefly to the lower orders of the city, and immediately the abandonment of the town began they declared themselves. Joined to them also were the *forçats*, the galley-slaves, who were released from confinement to the number of several thousand. They were led by some men of talent who had divined that

the best service they could render the Republic was to save the ships. In spite of all they could do at first, however, the English towed the fire sloops into the middle of the French liners huddled in the basin and successfully ignited them. They were soon blazing furiously.

As the several boat-crews from the frigate and the gunboats went from ship to ship in the roads and in the inner harbor, or having landed in the navy yard set building after building on fire, they were met by a constantly strengthening opposition. Arms there were in plenty, for the French ships had not even been dismantled, and the enterprise resolved itself into a series of hand-to-hand fights upon the decks of the different ships-of-the-line.

The opposition steadily grew stronger and more determined; and after setting fire to a number of ships it became evident to Macartney and to every one else that with the force at his command he could do no more. The remaining ships were crowded with men. Their batteries were cast loose and wherever they bore upon the English a heavy fire was poured upon them. They had done all that mortal man could do. There was nothing left but retreat. The Spanish had bungled things badly and effected little. A fireship in their charge blew up, wrecking some of the English boats. Reluctantly the Irishman gave the order to abandon their endeavor and pull for the frigate.

Now Macartney's perturbation was caused by his incertitude as to the fate of Louise de Vaudémont.

Almost would he have given his command for an assurance of her safety. The opportunity for distinction that had been vouchsafed him in the order for the burning of the French fleet was a great one. He would fain have yielded that to another had it been in any way possible to a man of honor, so that he might have gone in search of the woman he loved.

During the long days of the siege he had availed himself of that reluctant permission to visit her which he had extorted from her on the wharf; and from each interview he had come away more deeply enamoured than ever. The very hopelessness of his position, the apparent impossibility of any fruition to his love affair, and the immobility of the girl herself only served to stimulate it and intensify it. He had made easy conquests heretofore and his present difficulty only made him the more ardent.

He had nothing on earth, no resources, that is, but his sword. His pay as a captain was small, but such as it was it was the only revenue he could command. Louise de Vaudémont was even poorer than himself, but she was the granddaughter of one of the greatest nobles of France. In those days no one believed in the permanence of the French Republic. Everybody expected its speedy downfall. Upon the restoration of the monarchy de Vaudémont would find himself once more in the enjoyment of the princely revenues of his vast estates. He would disdain the simple captain in the navy of his dearest foe.

What mattered that? Macartney had the happy

optimism of his race. He had also much of its freedom from care for the future. He made love to the comtesse as persistently, as openly, and as desperately as he dared —and in her pursuit he dared much.

He did not allow himself to conceive that she might possibly regard him with indifference. She had indeed maintained such an attitude rigorously, yet now and then there were little indications of another feeling which his experience discerned and in which he took great comfort.

His anxiety at this present moment, when he was destroying the French ships and shipyards, arose from the fact that he had no assurance of her safety. The Marquis de Vaudémont was a man of sufficient importance to have received the first attention from the allies had he asked it. But, and here was the rub! Macartney realized that in all probability the vice-admiral's ideas of honor and dignity would not permit him to leave a post which had been in a measure committed to him, while any one else was unprovided with means of escape. Macartney was certain that the marquis would take steps to secure the embarkation of his grandchildren, especially Louise, but he had a shrewd suspicion that she would never desert her grandfather. It was this uncertainty as to their escape which had produced his agony of mind.

The capture of Fort Mulgrave had been so sudden and unexpected, the necessity for the prompt withdrawal of the fleets from the harbor had been so pressing, that Hood had summoned him to the flagship without

the loss of a moment, and charged him with the duty which under other circumstances he would have undertaken with unmitigated joy. So exacting had been this duty that he had had no time even to go ashore and inquire about her.

One by one the boats made for the *Inconstant*, which he had placed in such a position as to render her least liable to damage from the fire of the enemy. Macartney had been but a short time in the frigate, but he had already endeared himself to her crew. Everybody liked Macartney, women especially, and that the young comtesse had been so coldly indifferent to him but added zest to his pursuit of her. Naturally the captain's boat was the last to leave the French fleet. It was a heavy twelve-oared cutter and contained half a dozen marines forward. Moved by a natural impulse, instead of steering the boat directly to the frigate, Macartney, who had the tiller himself, swung her parallel to the crowded quay of the city at a short distance from the shore.

The scene in the harbor was one of appalling magnificence. From Fort Mulgrave and the other batteries a constant roar of artillery was kept up. The forts on all sides ringed the inner harbor of the city with smoke and flame. The flying English and Spanish ships swept down the harbor, their broadsides hurling death and destruction at the batteries on either hand. The water in the inner harbor was whipped into fountains by a hail of bullets, throwing great jets of spray into the air.

The burning French ships-of-the-line were blazing furiously, sending great columns of smoke and fire into

the heavens. The storehouses filled with inflammable material, the docks and other buildings, including the powder magazine, added their quota of flame and smoke to the infernal confusion of the terrible night. The place was bright as noonday. It was like the crater of a volcano. The Republican soldiers under cover of their batteries at last mounted the walls. Drunk with passion and enthusiasm they swept through the streets, butchering as they went, driving the helpless populace to join the mob already congested on the wharves and quays of the water front.

Men, women, and children were there. A wail of terror compounded from thousands of voices thrilled and sobbed in the air above the frightful tumult. Those nearest the water's edge stretched out their arms to Macartney in his boat in a vain and piteous appeal, crying to him for help, begging him to take them with him in the boat, offering him anything if he would only rescue them.

"My God!" he said to his midshipman, "isn't this awful? I have seen war in many places and in many phases, but never like this!"

"The boat would hold two or three more, sir," answered Hoste, the young reefer. "We might take off that many women and children."

"My lad," said Macartney, "to approach nearer them would be instant death. They would overwhelm the boat in a second. We would be swamped. No one would survive. Yet I would give my life to take them all."

As he spoke a half dozen men, seeing the boat pulling past the pier head, sprang into the water, thinking perhaps that Macartney would wait for them. The man turned away his head from the struggling wretches.

"You see," he said to the midshipman.

"Yes, sir. Isn't it awful?"

"Terrible! Put some muscle into your stroke, men!" cried the captain, addressing the oarsmen, "we can't let any one overtake us."

Even the men, coarse of fibre, rough in character, hardened and brutalized, as were the sailors of that day, accustomed to horrors and terrors of all kinds, were profoundly affected by this situation of the people on the quays. The cries of those nearest the water's edge were interrupted by the shrieks and volleys of musketry, and the sound of cannon shots. Above all this could be heard the fierce yells of the Republican soldiery, "*Vive la République!*"

"*Vive la République!*" Though death and destruction came to those who opposed its progress the march of human freedom must go on. "*Vive la République!*" Remorselessly it swept away every one who stood in its path and strove to check its onrush.

In the sack of Toulon that night men and women and children without regard to age, sex, or condition went down in that awful holocaust of blood and fire. There were some French officers and a number of men, a few in all, in whose breasts the well-spring of pity had not dried, who strove to check the butchery and to

restrain the pillage; but urged on by men like Barras, Salicetti, and Frèron, most brutal of them all, the Republicans gave free rein to their passions. Murder, outrage, torture, rapine, flourished unchecked, in spite of the entreaties of Dugommier and the better sort of his army. The streets ran blood. The soldiers were fairly sated with slaughter.

"We are drawing past the frigate, sir," at last ventured Hoste, touching his captain on the shoulder as he stared appalled at the ruin of the town.

"Men," said Macartney, suddenly, "I know that my sweetheart is in that town. I want to land at a little private wharf beyond that row of houses provided there is no mob there. There is an alley that leads straight to the back garden of her house. I can go there and return in ten minutes. I can't order any man to do a thing like this, but I want volunteers. Will you help me?"

"We will, sir," cried the coxswain of the crew. "Am I right, mates?"

"Ye are, Jack," cried one and another. "We'll help the cap'n git his lady."

"Mr. Hoste," said Macartney, "you will take charge of the boat. If it is possible for me to land at all I shall do so behind that row of storehouses. There is an old deserted landing there, and I imagine the mob will have forgotten it if they ever knew about it. As soon as I am landed, pull away a safe distance and lie on your oars. If I am not back in ten minutes, make the best of your way to the frigate and tell Mr.

Frazier that I am killed, and direct him to get under way and report to Admiral Hood that we burned as many ships as was humanly possible. Explain to him how it was we couldn't burn them all."

"Yes, sir, but hadn't you better take some one with you, sir?"

"It might be a good plan," said Macartney. "Men, I want a volunteer to go ashore with me."

Everybody hastened to offer himself, but the coxswain, a veteran seaman, insisted that it was his place to go, on account of his rank.

"You see, sir," he said, "I'm a sort of first luff on this yere craft, after you and Mr. Hoste, sir, and the first luff allus goes with a cuttin'-out expedition."

"You shall come, cox'n," said Macartney, smiling at the quaint logic. "Look well to your cutlass and pistol."

The boat by this time had drawn past the row of storehouses. Back of them was comparative darkness. They screened the place from the light of the burning ships. Into a black cavernous recess Macartney cautiously steered the cutter. There was a landing-place, an old and disused wharf. A flight of rotting wooden steps led to a small pier opening upon a narrow alley between high, dark buildings on either side.

"Good-by," said Macartney, clasping the boy's hand, "remember what I told you. Come, cox'n."

CHAPTER X

CONFRONTING THE MOB

BARING his sword and seizing a pistol in his left hand, in which his example was followed by the old sailor, Macartney sprang up the steps and moved quickly but cautiously up the dark alley. Some distance ahead of the pair a blaze of light shot across the passageway, showing the first intersecting street. It was filled with a mob of frightened people running toward the wharves. There were no soldiers there yet. In the confusion Macartney and the sailor by a quick dash succeeded in getting across unnoticed.

They ran another block and came to a broader street. Here a crowd of men barred their way. From their uniforms it was easy to see that they were Republican troops. An adjacent house was burning and the place was as light as day. A swift glance put Macartney in possession of the details of the scene.

At the corner of the street a little party stood at bay confronting the mob of soldiery, which had abandoned all semblance of order and had thrown discipline to the winds. Macartney's heart leaped in his breast as he recognized the Marquis de Vaudémont. In his hand the vice-admiral held a broken sword. By his side with upraised weapon was the young Comte Honoré.

Slightly in advance of the two stood the gigantic Brébœuf. He clasped a musket by the barrel and swung it lightly in the air with a threatening movement. Behind these three, with their backs against the wall, stood Aurore and Louise. In spite of her greater size and strength Aurore cowered against her mistress. The woman he loved stood erect, pistol in hand.

The crowd surrounding the little group was growing with each passing moment. Mingled with the soldiers were numbers of the wretched galley-slaves, scum of society, making foul use of their unexpected liberty. Here and there some drunken, dishevelled, abandoned woman, red liberty cap on her frowzy head, joined in the yells and shouts with which the troops closed in on their prey. These marauders urged the mob to greater excesses by their shrieks and screams.

"Down with the aristocrats!"

"To the lantern with them!"

"Give them a volley, men! That'll end it quickly."

"No, no, the bayonet!"

"Save the wenches!"

"*Vive la République!*"

The very mass and confusion of the crowd in the street prevented the mob from carrying out the cheerful suggestions which were made on every hand. They heaved and surged and swayed back and forth in the narrow way lighted by the blazing dwellings near at hand, vociferously yelling, but for the moment no one moved toward the party against the wall. Their first reception

by the marquis and Brébœuf had not been an hospitable one and the front rank naturally held back.

The bayoneting of unarmed men and helpless women and children was an easy pastime, but there was something menacing in the dauntless bearing of the old marquis, even though he was practically weaponless, for his sword had been broken a few inches from the guard and the rest of it stuck in the breast of a dead man at his feet; and there was something terribly threatening in the appearance of the gigantic Breton, who had already cracked two skulls with the butt of his musket, that gave the crowd a timely check. Their hesitation would be over in a moment, however. Indeed, that slow surge toward the wall which would soon develop into a rapid rush had already begun when Macartney and the coxswain burst upon the scene.

"These are my people! Into them, cox'n!" cried Macartney, firing his pistol point-blank into the mob and then hurling it at the nearest man.

The coxswain was as quick as he with his pistol. The crowd yelled in terror and gave way in mad confusion as the two men fell upon them. They were both big and powerful men, coming forward on the run. A ship's cutlass at close quarters is a terrible weapon. These had been ground to a razor edge. The coxswain literally cut in two the nearest man. Macartney chose to thrust. His sword-guard crashed against a breastbone, so fierce and powerful was his lunge. To disengage and thrust again was the work of a moment. There was another slash from the coxswain. The lust of

battle was on the sailor and he was yelling like a madman. Macartney's play was more silent, but none the less deadly. The crowd was so taken by surprise that for a moment it could make no resistance. The two Englishmen were practically fighting unarmed men. They did not hesitate on that account. In an incredible time they had cleared a space before the marquis and his party.

The vice-admiral, calm and serene as usual, had at once perceived the diversion effected by the flank attack of the two Englishmen. And he had not been idle. Hurling his broken weapon into the face of the nearest man, he wrested his sword from him, and with surprising quickness ran it through the man's body, springing back on guard before any one could strike at him. Honoré, too, had thrust valiantly at his nearest opponent, while Brébœuf had laid about him terrifically with his empty gun. He stood with his legs far apart swinging it like a flail. The next moment Macartney and the coxswain ranged themselves by the side of the marquis and Brébœuf.

"It's Captain Macartney!" suddenly cried the comtesse, recognizing him in the firelight.

"You come in the nick of time again, monsieur," said the marquis, coolly, for all his eyes were blazing with excitement. He dusted a fleck of soot from his sleeve as he spoke, "but to little purpose, I fear."

"I can at least die with you," answered Macartney, turning his head as he spoke to let the woman he loved know that his declaration referred particularly and exclusively to her.

Indeed, there seemed not the slightest possibility of escape. They were facing certain and immediate death once more, and so the young girl permitted some of her feelings to show in the glance with which she returned his own ardent look.

"They are coming again!" cried Honoré.

Such had been the fury of the onslaught of the English sailors and the stout defence of the marquis and the others that the crowd had fallen back and had left them alone for a brief space. It was instantly recognized, however, that the diversion had been caused by only two men and that it would be an easy matter to overwhelm them. With bayonets fixed, therefore, they swept down upon the little party. No one thought of firing upon them. Indeed the muskets had been discharged long since and to have reloaded them would have been to lose time. Fortunately there were no pistols among the soldiers, who were without commissioned officers. To that fact and the fact that their firearms were unavailable, the party owed their lives. One volley would have made short work of them. As it was, the bayonets of the Republicans were sufficiently formidable.

This time they came on in some sort of order. The bolder and more expert naturally forced themselves into the front line. The attack now could not be denied. The men who fought wasted no breath in shouts, although the noise from the outskirts of the crowd grew greater than before. Bayonet and cutlass met each other stoutly. Brébœuf got a thrust

through the left arm, but still swung the barrel of his musket — the stock had been beaten to pieces upon human heads — with his right arm. The marquis cut down the first man, but his sword was smashed by a blow from the butt of a musket which knocked him to the ground. Macartney instantly sprang in front of him, and cut down his assailant. The coxswain and young Honoré did their parts equally well.

After a furious lunge Macartney slipped on the bloody stones of the street and fell forward. He recovered himself by a superhuman effort, but found himself temporarily weaponless. The man in front of him clubbed his musket and attempted to strike him down. A pistol cracked behind him and the man fell. Louise had fired, saving his life. Not taking time even to turn his head Macartney stooped for his sword in the smoke, seized it, and went desperately for the next man. But the defenders had been crowded back against the wall now and nothing remained for them but to die fighting.

In the very extreme of their peril a horseman dashed through the crowd recklessly, scattering them right and left, and drew rein in front of those at bay. He was followed by several other mounted officers, who ranged themselves beside him.

"Well, *mes enfants*," he cried in a sharp, high-pitched, authoritative voice, which was heard distinctly above the noise of the crowd, "what have we here?"

"Aristocrats!" cried a burly sergeant who seemed to be in charge of the mob of soldiers.

"Down with the aristocrats!" cried the little officer, instantly.

"Ay, down with them! Down with them!" yelled the crowd.

"They have slain a dozen of our men, Citizen Captain!"

"Leave them to me, my brave friends," said the captain, quickly. "I'll see they are well punished. There is little to be gained from them and there's glorious pillage farther on. *En avant!*"

"Who is he that interposes between us and our vengeance?" cried a soldier, suddenly. "Are you an aristocrat, citizen?"

"God forbid!" said the little officer, lifting his huge cocked hat. "Long live the Republic!"

"This is the officer who established the 'Battery of the Fearless!'" cried a young officer near the little captain.

"Comrade, I was there!" yelled a soldier, striking his breast. "'Tis the very man!"

"It's the little captain of artillery!" cried another.

"Ay, he led the assault on the promontory last night! I was with him!" screamed a third.

"Long live the citizen captain!" roared the mob.

"General since last night, by permission of the convention," cried one of the other officers.

The little officer looked very small on his huge white horse. He was very pale of face and slender of person. He stared at the crowd from his bright eyes, apparently unaffected by their enthusiasm and approval.

There was something in his glance that moved men strangely. The yelling died away as he faced the mob.

"You know me then, my braves?" he asked at last, quietly enough. "No one serves the Republic better than I. Leave me these aristocrats. There is better plunder farther on."

"Long live the little general!" shouted one.

"Come on!" cried another from the surging crowd, as the cheer died away.

In another moment the soldiers and the people began to move along the street. The officer on the white horse turned to the marquis.

"Go," he said, "while you have time! We can't stop this slaughter everywhere."

There was a look of pity, of horror, of contempt, upon his handsome face as he spoke. It was easy to see what his opinion was of the laxity of discipline which permitted such scenes. And woe be to the soldier or civilian who would dare to cross his will when he acquired power in consonance with his evident capacity.

"Monsieur, you seem to be a gentleman," said the marquis, contemptuously. "This is what comes of a Republic!"

"If you are wise," repeated the little captain quickly, "you will not bandy words, but go while you have time."

"Whither?"

"This way," said Macartney, pointing down the nar-

row alley still dark. Without a word the marquis turned away. He disdained to have anything to do with any one representing the Republic.

"Sir," said Macartney, who was not so exacting, "you have done us a great service. What is your name?"

"'Tis of no consequence — yet, sir! Go! I cannot help you further," responded the officer, striking spur to his steed.

There was wisdom in the counsel. Macartney turned at once. Taking the comtesse by the hand, a service which the coxswain performed for Aurore, with Brébœuf and the boy and the marquis in the lead, Macartney urged the fugitives rapidly down the dark street. The next cross street, the only one between them and the wharf, was filled with a larger crowd than the other. They paused in the darkness on the edge of it.

"We shall never win through," said the marquis, quickly.

"We must!" cried Macartney. "Follow me," he said boldly, after a moment's thought. Before him he saw a red cap, the characteristic bonnet of the Republic, lying in the street. He took off his coat and threw it with his cocked hat back in the darkness of the alley. Then he put on the red liberty cap.

"Don't say a word!" he whispered to the coxswain as they entered the street. "If you value your life, silence, and follow me!"

The marquis started to expostulate when he saw the red cap.

"Not a word!" cried Macartney, urging him forward.

In a moment they were in the middle of the street.

"Who comes here?" cried a party of soldiers, stopping their progress.

"*Vive la République!*" instantly cried Macartney in the excellent French of which he was a master. "Behold, comrades, a party of aristocrats I have captured!"

The marquis, without hesitation, instantly gave color to Macartney's assertion; for, when he heard Macartney cheering for the Republic, as a matter of honor he shouted "*Vive le Roi!*"

"Silence, you fool!" shouted Macartney in a threatening manner. "Come on!"

"Better kill the aristocrats at once, comrade," cried one of the soldiers.

"No, I keep them for my own purposes. Let us pass!"

"Way there!" cried a sub-officer, who seemed to be in command; "let the brave citizen pass."

"We lose time," growled another. "*En avant*, comrades!"

The procession through the street, which had temporarily slowed up, surged toward the quays again, and Macartney, every sense strung to its highest tension, half led, half forced his party across the street. Just as they reached the other side, the coxswain stumbled. He ripped out a round British oath as he fell almost into the arms of one of the Republican soldiers. His nationality was discovered at once. There was something about the whole party that was suspicious.

"They are Englishmen!" roared a man, catching the coxswain by the shoulder.

The sailor balled his fist and stopped further explanation by a terrific blow upon the jaw of his enemy. The damage had been done, however. The cry alarmed the crowd, which once more halted and faced toward the alley.

A stout, burly man, with his arm in a sling, forced his way to the front. In the light the marquis recognized the face of Garron, and that worthy instantly discovered the old man.

"'Tis the *ci-devant* Marquis de Vaudémont!" roared Garron, "and Englishmen! At them, citizens!"

"We must run for it!" cried Macartney.

"From this *canaille!* Never!" said the marquis, but the Irishman did not wait a second.

Tightening his hold upon the young comtesse, with his other hand he grabbed the smaller man by the arm, although to do so he was forced to drop his sword. Shouting to the others, he plunged down the alley in the darkness. It would have been easy for the Republicans to have caught them had they known just what to do. They had gone some distance, however, before the mob realized what had happened. Then, instead of pursuing, those nearest the alley levelled their pieces and fired in the direction of the fugitives.

One bullet cut across Macartney's forehead, covering his face with blood in an instant. Another nicked the arm of the comtesse. Brébœuf got a third in the

shoulder. A fourth tore the hat from the coxswain. The rest of the party were uninjured.

A faint scream from the woman by his side apprised Macartney that she whom he loved was wounded. Instantly the Irishman released the marquis and picked her up in his arms. He did it on the dead run, not checking his pace for a second. The sound of the firing had taken away from the marquis all desire to remain. His dignity was hopelessly shattered by this time in the wild flight, and he valiantly kept up with the rest.

A few steps brought them to the wharf. The alley was now filled with a mass of soldiers running toward them. The boat was not at the landing, but as they reached it she shot out of the darkness, fairly jumping forward under the eager stroke of her oarsmen.

"This way, men!" shouted Macartney. "Marines, out on the wharf! Bear a hand. For our lives!"

"Hold water!" cried Mr. Hoste from the stern sheets of the cutter. "Stern all! Ship your oars to starboard there! Now, out with you!"

His readiness and skill had brought the boat to the landing without the loss of a moment. Before she was fairly alongside the marines leaped for the stairs.

"Give them a volley!" shouted Macartney as they passed him. "Lively!"

The alley was dark, but the light from the street behind threw the figures of the approaching Frenchmen into relief. The marines were firing from darkness to the light and their range was point-blank. The whole

front of the Republicans went down before the well-aimed volley of the sea soldiers. The discharge was in the nature of a surprise. The advance of the mob was checked ; they were thrown into confusion.

Under cover of the volley Macartney had passed the women, the marquis, and the young Comte Honoré to the stern sheets. The coxswain took his accustomed place in the coxswain's box. Then the sailor called the marines into the boat, Brébœuf crowded among them, the officer scrambled aboard and thrust the cutter violently from the shore. Macartney stood in the bow and called for the men at the oars, who were all armed with heavy pistols, to pass up their weapons. In a moment the six marines, with himself and Brébœuf, found themselves once more armed.

The Republican soldiers, recovering from their surprise, came running down the alley and swarmed out on the landing-stage. Beneath them, a few feet away, was the boat. The men had broken out their oars and were pulling lustily toward the frigate. As they drew past the storehouses they came fairly within the zone of light from the burning ships. A cry of rage broke from the soldiery.

"Fire upon them, men, fire!" ordered Macartney, lifting his pistol.

The range was short, and several men fell from the volley which was delivered. The boat had swung by this time and was fairly jumping through the water, increasing its distance from the wharf at every stroke. The mass of soldiers had previously discharged their

pieces. A few, however, ran to the edge and fired at the boat. One of the marines was hit and instantly killed. One of the oars was smashed, but otherwise no damage was done. Before another volley could be fired the cutter was out of range. Macartney called out to see if any one else had been hurt, and being informed in the negative directed Mr. Hoste to bring the boat alongside the frigate.

He had not attempted to get back to the stern sheets, on account of the crowd already aboard the cutter, which was sunk almost to the gunwales. Hoste, a very capable young officer, performed his duty with skill, and the cutter was soon close aboard the ship.

There was no accommodation ladder shipped; there was no time for it. The situation was most precarious. The marquis scrambled up the side battens as nimbly, however, as he had done when a midshipman. The young comtesse hesitated a second, but under the imperious urging of Macartney, who gave her such assistance as he could, she soon gained the deck. Aurore was unceremoniously driven aboard; the rest followed with alacrity. The boat was dropped astern, the tackles hooked on, the falls manned by half the crew, and it was run up to the davits in short order.

CHAPTER XI

THE DASH OF THE *INCONSTANT*

THE *Inconstant* was the last English ship in the harbor. From where she lay she was comparatively immune from the enemy's fire. So soon as she got under way, however, she would be compelled to run the gantlet of the French batteries. Macartney had done magnificently with the force at his command. He looked back upon the work of destruction with a glow of satisfaction now. He could enjoy it since the woman he loved was safe through his agency and aboard his own ship. Triumphantly he gave orders to get under way.

"Shall we cut the cable and run, sir," asked Frazier, his first lieutenant.

"No," he replied, "there is no use wasting anything. They cannot do us much damage here and they can't do us any more damage yonder," pointing to the channel, "on account of a few moments' delay. Weigh anchor, sir, and get under way in proper style. We'll do this thing up handsomely and show those lubbers what a British ship can do."

In a moment the messenger was passed, the capstan was manned, and the rapid clinking of the pawls pro-

claimed that the anchor would soon be broken out under the heavy heaving of the eager crew.

The *Inconstant* was riding to an off-shore breeze and a strong ebb. Her own crew was reënforced by the boat details from the other ships which had been used in the burning of the French fleet. There were hands and to spare for everything. Consequently the cable was hove short in an unusually brief time. As Macartney had said, it was not necessary to cut cables or throw away anything, but nevertheless they had no time to spare. The quicker they got out of the harbor the better. They were out of musket shot of the wharves, but if the Republicans brought up a battery of guns — which they certainly would do — they could make it very interesting for the frigate, which would be prevented from returning their fire by the helpless mob of women and children and non-combatants who were being butchered before their very eyes. Therefore Macartney rejoiced greatly when the master sang out: —

"Avast heaving! Short stay, sir!"

Macartney chose to take his ship out himself. Seizing the trumpet, he called out,

"Pawl the capstan!"

Eager hands stoppered the cable and unshipped the bars.

"Lay aloft, sail loosers!" cried the captain.

In an instant the shrouds were shaking under the nimble feet of the alert topmen. In an incredibly short time to a landsman, the men had gained their stations and stood clustered around the mastheads on the yards.

"Lay out and loose!" roared Macartney, and, as the men swung along the foot-ropes to the yard-arms, "Man the topsail sheets and halyards!"

Meanwhile alert young seamen scampered out on the sweeping headbooms and loosed the jibs. The afterguard was busy casting off the lashings of the spanker.

"Smartly, men!" shouted Macartney. "We'll show these Frenchmen what an English frigate can do!"

In a brief space the reports of the several officers indicated that all was ready throughout the ship.

"Stand by!" called Macartney in his stentorian tones. "Let fall! Sheet home! Lay in!"

The topmen once more swung themselves along the foot-ropes and clustered about the masts, while the men on deck ran the clews of the sails down to the yard-arms. Casting a glance aloft to see if the yards were clear, Macartney shouted again: —

"Down from aloft!"

Once more the shrouds shook and quivered under the feet of the men. A few hands remained aloft to see that the gear did not foul and to overhaul the rigging. So soon as the men were clear of the yards Macartney gave the next order.

"Ease away the tops'l clewlines! Tend the braces! Set taut! Hoist away the tops'ls!"

The ordinary crew for a heavy frigate like the *Inconstant* was four hundred men. There were at least six hundred on the decks, so many that all of them could scarcely get hold of the falls of the halyards. The

ponderous yards were mastheaded, as the sails had been sheeted home, like magic. In an instant the ship rang with the cries from the officers.

"Belay the maintops'l halyards!"

"High enough the fore!"

"Well with the mizzen!"

Macartney elected to cast to starboard, as such a proceeding would bring him farther away from the most dangerous battery on the promontory.

"Man the port head, starboard after braces!" he shouted. "Clear away the bowlines! Tend the braces! Haul taut! Brace up! Brace abox!"

The effect of this manœuvre was to present the vast expanse of the foretopsail fairly to the wind, so that so soon as the anchor was let go the ship's head would be driven to starboard. She would make a half circle and point fair for the entrance to the harbor. Macartney intended to cast under topsails alone, as the wind was fresh, and so soon as he got under way to set the topgallant sails and royals if she would bear them. The instant the head-yards were braced abox he shouted: —

"Man the capstan!"

The heavy bars were shipped and swiftered. The eager men sprang to them and heaved mightily, dragging the great ship up to the anchor, which in a moment was reported.

"Up and down, sir!"

After another tremendous surge around, the iron flukes were broken from their holding, when —

"Man the jib and flying jib halyards! Helm alee!" came from the captain.

Instantly the bow of the frigate began to pay off under the thrust of the foretopsail. So soon as the head-sails would draw the order came: —

"Let go the downhauls and hoist away! Avast heaving, pawl the capstan!"

Under the influence of her present sail the *Inconstant*, a swift, handy, and beautiful ship, as were all the French models, spun around on her heel as gracefully as a lady at a dance. She trembled before the wind for a moment as if uncertain what to do next. Her master was on the quarter-deck, however, watching her, conning her, like a lover.

"Right the helm!" shouted the captain. "Brace around the head-yards! Haul out the spanker sheets! Lay aloft, light yardmen! Loose the to'gallan's'ls and r'yals!"

In a very short time after the first order was given the frigate was heading straight through the channel, with the wind on her quarter, going furiously.

"Very handsomely done, sir," said the old marquis, who had stood back of the captain noting every manœuvre with the greatest pleasure and approbation.

"Thank you, sir."

"You will not get past without a shot, though," continued the vice-admiral, his glance sweeping the shore.

"Ay, sir. 'Twill be warm work for the moment. But the ship is a fast goer. We'll soon draw out

from the batteries unless they should cripple us by a lucky shot."

"They are poor gunners, these Republicans."

"Yes," said Macartney. "They are learning, however. Perhaps you would be safer below, Admiral."

The marquis smiled.

"I never went below on a ship in action in all my life, and I do not propose to do so now. But you, Louise — "

"I stay with you, sir," answered the girl, who was looking at Macartney as if he had been a god.

"Mr. Frazier," said Macartney to his first lieutenant, as he handed him his trumpet, "get the men to their quarters. Cast loose and provide both batteries. Double-shot the guns. We'll get it from both sides. Let the lieutenants station the new hands among our own crew. Thank God, we've plenty of men!"

In a moment the grim rattling of the drum beating to quarters started everybody to activity. The crowded decks after an instant of apparent confusion cleared like magic. Around every cannon there was a little cluster of men busily engaged in casting loose and providing the war monsters they served; powder-boys scampered hither and thither carrying the charges of powder; lighted loggerheads gleamed in the darkness. They had begun to draw far enough away from the burning ships in the harbor and the flaming town to get into the shadow of the night. In a few moments the first lieutenant reported all was ready. Macartney's glance swept the outer harbor, the entrance to which

they were approaching. It would be perhaps five or ten minutes before they would be fairly abreast the batteries.

"Hold on as you are, Mr. Frazier," said Macartney, turning toward his cabin. "I shall return in a few moments."

"You are wounded!" said Louise, putting out a detaining hand as he passed her. "I have watched you — wanted to help you — but you had no time."

"'Tis a trifle, mademoiselle," answered the happy Macartney, in truth very glad that the bullet had touched him where it did.

"And you were wounded for me," added the girl. "Let me help you."

"Sure an' I wouldn't object if it had taken off an arm if it was in your service, mademoiselle!"

"Your face is covered with blood, monsieur!"

"I must be a very nice-looking spectacle," said the captain, feeling his cheek, on which the blood had dried.

"Won't you have a doctor?"

"He is busy forward with those poor fellows who are seriously hurt."

"I have some little skill. Won't you let me — "

"But it is nothing, I tell you."

"I insist! Grandfather, I wish to dress Captain Macartney's wound for him."

"By all means," said the marquis. "Do what you can for him, my child. We owe him much."

"We'll return in a moment, sir," said Macartney, now

eager to be alone with the woman he loved, if only for a minute.

He led the way into the cabin. The frigate had a raised poop and the captain's quarters opened upon the quarter-deck. He thanked God as he went that the marquis was so interested in the passage of the forts that he had not followed. The marquis was the pink of propriety, and he would never have permitted such an interview under other circumstances. He actually viewed Macartney as he might have regarded some humble gentleman attached to his house. Even Aurore was busy between Brébœuf and the coxswain, who seemed to think he had a certain privilege in her society because he had dragged her shrieking through the streets. In her agitation Louise forgot to call her maid.

The cabin of the frigate was a spacious one; a swinging lamp from the ceiling gave plenty of light. By Louise's direction Macartney procured a basin of water, a towel, and a pair of scissors from his stateroom opposite. He placed them on a table and sat down beside it. The girl stepped behind him, pressing her fingers to his head and bending it toward the light.

"Why, it's a deep gash!" she exclaimed.

"Faith," said Macartney, smiling, "your fingers are more deadly than the enemy's bullet, mademoiselle. I did not feel that, but your touch is more than I can stand."

"Is this the time for jesting, monsieur?" interrupted the girl, severely.

The next instant she began to cut away the hair from about the wound. The bullet had glanced upward along the cheek and passed over the temple. Much of Macartney's curly hair on that side of his head was matted with coagulated blood. In a moment she had bared the place, then with deft fingers she washed it, wiped it with the towel, and looked about as if for something softer as a bandage.

"Haven't you anything better than this?" she asked him, lifting the towel; "the linen is so coarse."

"Nothing, I am afraid," smiled Macartney. "That's good enough for a sailor."

"Turn away your head, monsieur; do not look," said the girl, coming to a sudden resolution.

There was a sound as of some one stooping, then a sudden long and one short pull. Macartney would have given anything to have looked round.

"It's part of my linen skirt," she said, binding the soft cloth around his head. "'Tis the best I can do."

"An angel could do no better."

"Now, monsieur, how do you feel?"

"Comtesse," said Macartney, fervently, with Celtic extravagance, "I wish it had taken off my head — the bullet, I mean. Then you would not have finished with me so soon."

He rose to his feet as he spoke and accidentally brushed against her arm. He noticed that she winced as if with pain.

"What!" he cried in dismay, and with remorse in his voice. "You were hurt, too, and I forgot it!"

"You did not forget it when you — you picked me up and ran with me. Oh, monsieur, how could you?" She blushed painfully at the recollection, and yet it had been rather pleasant after all. She found herself agreeing with him when he said boldly: —

"I'd like a chance to do it again! But your wound, mademoiselle? Let me see it."

"It is nothing," she said softly. "Merely a touch."

"Yes. That's what I said about mine, and you convinced me that it was very serious indeed. It's my turn now. Where is it?"

"There!" pointing to her left arm.

Whipping out his knife, he gently slit the sleeve. There was a little nick about half an inch long in the upper part of her arm. The bullet had just broken the skin, but it was an ugly-looking spot in the soft, white flesh of that sweet, round young arm. If she had lost her arm, Macartney could not have made more to-do about it. He washed it tenderly, and handled it as if it had been a baby. Then in reckless daring he bent and kissed it.

"Your treatment differs from mine, monsieur," said the girl, protesting faintly.

"Faith, yes. I think it's an improvement on yours," said Macartney, "and it isn't too late to try it on me if you like the effect. Now, if I only had something to bind it up with. Here, let me give you this."

He lifted his hand to the bandage about his head.

"I have more, monsieur, if you will turn your back," said the girl.

In another moment she placed a slender piece of linen in his hand.

"How beautifully you tie knots," she said, as she noted his skilful handiwork.

"There is one knot I'd like to tie —"

"And that one?" she asked him incautiously.

"Is the one that would bind us together, mademoiselle."

"I am for France, monsieur," she answered, shaking her head.

"This for France," he cried, slipping his arm about her waist. He stooped over and bent to kiss her lips. She did not struggle or shrink away.

"Monsieur!" she cried. "Mercy!"

There was such piteous entreaty in her voice as if he were so strong and she so weak that he stopped just when the kiss was within reach. Such forbearance was a new thing for Macartney. The girl waited a second and then her head dropped before him. He released her and as he did so he bent and kissed her golden hair with respectful tenderness.

"You saved my life," she murmured in self-justification.

"That privilege pays for it already," he answered softly. "Besides, that shot when I lost my sword! You saved mine and 'tis yours always. Oh, mademoiselle — Louise" — he took both her hands in a warm, passionate clasp — "believe me, I love you with my whole soul!"

There was a noise at the door and Mr. Hoste entered the cabin.

"Mr. Frazier says we are coming down upon the batteries very fast, sir."

"I am coming, Mr. Hoste. Go below, comtesse," said Macartney. "You will be safer there."

He turned instantly and stepped out upon the deck. Already the batteries in the forts were firing toward the ship. The water all around her was cut into jets of spray by the glancing shot. Macartney ran up the ladder and stood at the break of the poop where he could see everything.

"Let no one fire under pain of death until I give the order," he called out to the men in the batteries. "We'll pour a smashing broadside into them on either hand and so win through in the smoke."

"'Twill be close work, sir," said the marquis, who had joined him.

"Ay, but we shall make it right enough, sir."

The shots from the shore were coming quicker then. One from a heavy gun, better aimed than the rest, crossed the deck and tore a great hole in the mainsail. Another carried away the forward swifter of the starboard foreshrouds. A third struck down a man in the forecastle.

"Another moment and we'll be abreast of them," urged the vice-admiral, his soul kindling at the prospect of action.

"I know it," said Macartney, coolly.

The batteries on the shore were blazing furiously now. Shot was hurled upon them from every direction.

"Stand by!" shouted the captain.

As he spoke there was a crash above his head. The main topgallant mast had been carried away by a shot and hung in a tangled mass of wreckage thrashing to leeward. The wind was sweeping through the top-hamper with increasing force. She was carrying all she could stand, and a touch meant a lost spar or sail. Well, there was nothing to be done but hold on now. Macartney cast one glance upward, and seeing that the damage was not so serious as it might have been, he lifted the trumpet and shouted: —

"Fire!"

The frigate quivered and shivered from truck to keelson with the shock of the two mighty broadsides. Her forty heavy guns hurled a very tempest of iron toward the shore on either hand. The broadside did much execution. The fire that was returned as she rushed forward into her own smoke, driven ahead by the fierce wind, was sputtering and ineffectual. As they raced past the promontory Macartney put his helm down, brought the ship by the wind, and, taking a bone in her teeth, she bore up for the open sea.

One effect of his manœuvre was greatly to diminish the size of the target at which the shore batteries must aim, although by doing so he increased the vulnerability of the ship, since he presented her stern to the enemy, but she was going at such a speed and the Republicans were such poor gunners, owing perhaps to the confusion caused by her tremendous broadsides, that the frigate was soon out of danger.

"Send some hands aloft to clear away the wreck! Have them rig a new to'gallant mast, and set the watch, Mr. Frazier," said Macartney, yielding the trumpet to his executive officer.

They were free.

CHAPTER XII

THE MARQUIS SAYS "NO!"

"MADEMOISELLE!" exclaimed the captain in some surprise as he descended to the quarter-deck where Louise and Aurore were standing. "Were you there all the time? It was dangerous, extremely so, you —"

"Yes," answered the girl, "but I could not go below. My — my grandfather was in peril. I could not leave him."

"Admiral," said Macartney, "if you will take the comtesse to my cabin, I will join you in a moment or two. I must first of all look to my ship and men."

A few of the men had been wounded and one killed by the fire of the batteries. The ship had been cut up somewhat, but a brief inspection satisfied her captain that she had suffered no material damage, not any at least that her own crew could not repair. In a short time she would be as fit as ever for service. When he entered the cabin he called his steward to him and told him to bring some refreshments for his passengers.

"Sir," said the marquis, so soon as this matter had been attended to, "there are several things I wish to say to you."

And one at least, thought Macartney, that I wish to say to you.

"Yes, monsieur," he said to the older man.

"First, I desire to compliment you on the way you handled your ship. It was magnificent! You are such a seaman, young man, as I should have been proud to have met with a ship of my own in my younger days. De Suffren would have appreciated you as I do."

"I thank you, sir."

"And I am under everlasting obligation to you for your gallant rescue of my party this evening."

"If I may make bold to ask, Admiral, how came you to be in that situation?"

"I stayed on the walls to the very last moment. The troops with me were cut down, or they fled. Not until then, I assure you, did I retreat."

"I can well believe that, sir."

"I was on horseback, and I easily made my way past the few Republicans who had gained the town at that time — although the *canaille* were swarming over the walls in every direction — to my *hôtel*. I knew of the alley down which I finally came, and I hoped to escape that way. I had given orders during the afternoon that Comte Honoré and the comtesse, with their attendants, should repair on board the ships. Judge of my surprise, Monsieur Macartney, when I found them still there!"

"We could not go and leave you, grandfather," murmured Louise, while young Honoré nodded in vigorous assent to her words.

"You should have obeyed my orders, child," said the marquis, severely. "For me you could do nothing. With me —"

"I understand exactly how the comtesse felt," said Macartney, eagerly interposing to break the old man's censure. "Of course she could not abandon you, monsieur. And the rest stayed with her."

The marquis looked at the young man keenly, then went on.

"Well, sir, we had successfully passed the first cross streets when the mob overtook us—and you know the rest. How happened you to be there?"

"I was looking for you, sir. I had received orders to burn the French ships, and having completed my task so far as I could—"

"How many did you burn, monsieur?"

"Nine of the line."

"Nine magnificent ships!" exclaimed the marquis. "Alas, my poor France! Proceed, monsieur."

"I knew of the existence of this alley which led to your *hôtel*."

"How knew you that, monsieur?"

"I had made a study of the approach to your residence, sir, in view of this very contingency."

"*Bien!* Go on."

"I sent my other boats back to the frigate and landed to find out what I could. The rest you know."

"Captain Macartney, you have proved yourself an officer of address and courage. There is but one feature in your conduct of which I disapprove."

"What is that, my lord?"

"Why did you cheer for those rascally Republicans in the last street?"

"Not from any choice, believe me, Admiral. It was the only way by which I could win through with the comtesse — with yourself, sir. And for your sake, sir," he went on audaciously, "I would cheer for the very devil himself in such a predicament!"

"It would not be my way," said the marquis, stubbornly.

"Well, sir, give me leave. It was that way or none."

"Let that pass. At any rate, you saved us."

"But I would have failed, sir, had it not been for that young officer who interfered."

"I am loath to owe anything to a Republican," said the marquis, gloomily.

"The Republic is bad enough," said Macartney, "but there may be some good in individual Republicans. There was something about that man that impressed me profoundly. We shall hear from him again, I feel sure."

"He certainly did us good service. I shall see," continued the old man, thoughtfully, "when his Majesty is restored to his own, that the young officer is not beheaded. What was his name?"

"He would not say, although I asked him."

"I wish we had learned it," mused the marquis. "His appearance is unfamiliar to me. Certainly he does not belong to the *haute noblesse*. Not many of them have rebelled against their King, although there be some who have disgraced their name and fame that way. Well, monsieur, perhaps the time may come when I may show gratitude to you in some fitting way."

"You may show it now, sir," said the Irishman, "although I do not urge my request on that plea."

"And how may I show it now?"

"Sir, I love your granddaughter."

"What! Captain Macartney! You! An Englishman, a commoner, a sailor, have dared to love the Comtesse de Vaudémont! Impossible!"

"Sir," said Macartney, stanchly. "'Tis true that I am a sailor. But so are you. My present rank in the service is but two degrees less than yours. I see no reason why I should not eventually fly an admiral's flag, and that sooner than you think. My family is as old as your own. I have as yet no title, but I can win one. I love the comtesse and would fain make her my wife."

"Sir, you have told me that you have nothing but your profession. You are absolutely penniless, saving your pay, which I understand is meagre. My granddaughter, together with her young brother here, is heiress to the vast estates of the de Vaudémonts."

"Let me remind you that those estates are in the possession of the French Republic."

"Temporarily, yes, but that is a matter of but a short time. No, monsieur, I am under many obligations to you which I shall discharge in some suitable way, believe me," continued the old man, firmly but kindly, "but there are many reasons why my granddaughter is not for you and cannot be! Put the idea out of your mind, sir; 'tis impossible. The demoiselle de Vaudémont will have other suitors of her own rank and her own race."

"I will have no one, Monsieur le Marquis," cried Louise, her eyes shining, her bosom heaving. "As I told Monsieur Macartney, I am for France."

"Be it so," said her grandfather, gravely, "we'll not talk of marrying or giving in marriage while our country is in this unhappy state. We will wait until our King comes to his own again."

"But may I not hope then, Marquis?" cried Macartney.

"No, my friend," returned the marquis, promptly and firmly. "At least not from any word or sanction of mine."

"But, monsieur—"

"We are your guests, Captain, and crave your consideration as to the choice of topics for future conversation."

"You say well," said Macartney; "as my guests you may command me. But King or no King, France or no France, I shall never cease to aspire to the hand of the Comtesse de Vaudémont, nor to hope that in the end she may respond to my passion. At present we will say no more about it. Now, Monsieur le Marquis, what can I do for you?"

"Whither are you bound?" asked the marquis.

"I rejoin the fleet in Hyères Bay. Where do you wish to go?"

"I am told the Regent is in Westphalia. If we could be taken to the most convenient port and landed there, I should like to join him with my family."

"That will be Trieste, sir, I think, since Italy is held

by the French. When I report to Lord Hood," said Macartney, formally, "I will ask his permission to take you where you desire. Meanwhile, I beg you and your suite to consider this cabin as your own. There are two staterooms, one on either side, as you see. The comtesse and her maid can have that one, you can occupy the other, the young comte can sleep out here with your attendant, and I trust you may all be comfortable. I shall lie to to-night. I would not dare to try to beat up to the anchorage of the fleet until the morning."

"Sir, we thank you for your courtesy. The accommodation is all that we could desire. I will take this cabin as you suggest," said the marquis, stepping over to the port stateroom and looking into it for a moment.

Macartney had a chance for another word with Louise which he instantly embraced.

"I am for France," she protested softly in reply.

"Nay," persisted the Irishman, "but for me."

The marquis turned at that instant.

"Good-night, messieurs, mademoiselle," said the captain, saluting and stepping toward the door.

By the door stood Brébœuf. He drew up his gigantic frame as the Irishman approached him. He was so tall that his head almost touched the top of the low cabin. He knuckled his forehead like a seaman.

"A man," he said in his deep-toned voice.

It was the first time Macartney had ever heard him

speak. He stopped in bewilderment, half comprehending.

"He means," said the girl, softly, "that you are a man indeed. 'Tis a great compliment from Brébœuf."

"I thank you, friend," said Macartney, smiling, as he passed out on deck.

CHAPTER XIII

OF MORE VALUE THAN A SHIP-OF-THE-LINE

EARLY the next morning the *Inconstant* came ripping into Hyères Bay before a strong westerly breeze, ran down to the station of the frigates, and dropped her anchor. Macartney immediately repaired on board the *Victory* and sent in his name to Lord Hood. He was at once ushered into the presence of the famous old sea dog. By a happy chance the Irishman found Captain Nelson in the cabin. Hood, like the officers of that day, was a strict disciplinarian and a great stickler for the proprieties. Macartney stopped at the door and saluted.

"Ah, Captain Macartney," said the admiral, "I am glad to see you. What of the French fleet?"

"We burned nine of the line, my lord, besides frigates, sloops, transports, and the storehouses, magazines, and dockyards."

Hood smiled and looked over at Captain Nelson.

"You were right, Nelson," he said. Then he turned to Macartney, frowning. "And why didn't you burn them all, sir?"

"Faith, Admiral," answered the Irishman, who was afraid of nobody, "we were lucky to get away with nine. One of the fire-ships blew up; we lost two gun-

boats. The Spaniards were a hindrance, not a help. The enemy seized the town; the Republican rascals, who had been lying low while we had the upper hand, armed themselves from the arsenal, liberated the convicts, made common cause with the besiegers, and manned the ships. The last three we burned we took by boarding and the hardest kind of hand-to-hand fighting. My men are equal to most things, sir, but when it came to the carrying of a ninety-gun ship with a thousand people aboard her by the crew of a frigate in cutters, naturally after I tried it once I concluded that it was time for us to go."

"You tried it once?"

"Yes, my lord. I might say I tried it half a dozen times, and successfully, but the opposition got stronger and stronger with every try. If I had had two or three ships-of-the-line, now —"

"I couldn't risk any of his Majesty's capital ships in that task. A frigate —"

"And a captured one at that," interjected Macartney, softly, under his breath.

"Was as much as I could stand to lose."

"Well, sir, you didn't lose her either, for there she lies at her anchorage ready for instant service."

"Good!"

"Give me leave, Admiral," said Nelson, eagerly. "Do you know what ships they were you burned, Macartney?"

"I have a memorandum of them here, Captain," answered Macartney. "In default of a better place

of record I jotted them down on my shirt sleeve as we burned them."

"Transcribe it at your leisure, Captain Macartney," said the admiral, "and give it to my secretary."

"Ay, ay, sir."

"That leaves the beggars eighteen ships-of-the-line, but no frigates," said Nelson. The young captain thought a moment.

"Yes, sir."

"That agrees with our tally, I believe, my lord," said Nelson to the admiral.

"Ay, ay, we'll take care of the others if they dare to poke their noses out of the harbor, as God grant they may," remarked Hood.

"Yes, my lord," answered Nelson. "Really there will be more glory to be won by beating them on the open sea than by burning them abandoned in the harbor."

"Yes," said Hood, "doubtless. You young hot-bloods think only of glory. Old men like I am have in mind first of all the destruction of the enemy in the easiest and most convenient way. Not but what I would like to meet these rebellious gentry under their three-striped flag with plenty of sea room and with just enough ships to give them the odds," smiled the old man, his eyes sparkling under his snowy hair.

"You're as bad as the rest of us, Admiral," remarked Macartney, audaciously.

There was much difference in position between a veteran captain of a ship-of-the-line and a newly appointed

captain of a frigate. What Nelson might have said with propriety sounded presumptuous in Macartney. The Irishman, however, made up in assurance for what he lacked in rank. As he was a great favorite with the admiral the latter merely smiled at this remark and continued: —

"Now, Captain Macartney, you have done extraordinarily well. I don't mind telling you that in talking the matter over with Captain Nelson I scarcely thought that you would be able to account for more than half a dozen of the ships. He offered to wager a commission for a ship-of-the-line for you that you were good for at least nine, not counting a single frigate."

"And did you take the bet, my lord?" eagerly asked Macartney.

"No, sir, I did not. It was a wager in which I paid if I lost, while if I won I got nothing."

"Pardon, my lord. You got nine ships-of-the-line!"

"Well," said the old man, smiling at the other's ready wit, "there's something in that. We shall see. What happened after you withdrew from the French fleet?"

"I sent the boats back to the frigate, my lord, and I — I —"

He hesitated. He knew of course there was no defence for his subsequent actions. He was too honorable a man to evade the question, yet he was naturally most reluctant to tell the admiral.

"You didn't go back to the frigate yourself, then, I take it, from your hesitation," said the old man, looking keenly at him.

"Well, no, sir, not directly."

The admiral frowned, then looked at Nelson again, and both men burst into hearty laughter.

"You will pardon us, Captain Macartney," said Lord Hood, as soon as he could recover himself, "but Nelson offered another wager — I forget just what it was — but he said that he was cock-sure that you'd be up to some daredevil trick or other after you performed your duty."

"There wasn't any particular daring about it, sir. I just ran along the wharves — at a safe distance, of course — "

"What was the state of affairs?"

"Awful, my lord! The quays were crowded with men and women and children begging and imploring to be taken away. I never saw such a sight in my life! Those French hell-hounds — begging your pardon, sir — were shooting and murdering and doing worse than that for aught I know, without let or hindrance. I would have given my life for means to take the people on the boat."

"Every ship in the harbor," said the admiral, sternly, "is crowded to the safety limit with refugees. I would give my life as lightly as yours, Captain Macartney, but I could not further jeopardize the safety of his Majesty's fleet confided to my charge."

"Of course not, sir," answered Macartney, somewhat abashed at the veteran's severity, "I meant nothing, my lord."

"What did you do then, Macartney?" deftly broke in Nelson at this juncture.

"I wanted to know whether Vice-admiral de Vaudémont had escaped or not. I had a sneaking idea that notions of honor would keep him in Toulon until the last moment, and you know, sir, having rescued the old gentleman I felt a sort of interest in — ah — in him."

"Of course," laughed Nelson, "your devotion is quite filial, isn't it?"

Macartney smiled at his former little captain.

"Hasn't he a daughter?" broke in Hood, bluntly.

"No, my lord, a granddaughter, also a grandson."

"I presume your interest in these two was paternal?" he asked, having quite recovered his good humor.

"Of course, Admiral. Well, gentlemen, I took the cutter up past the warehouses to a secluded landing that I knew of which opened on the alley leading to the Marquis de Vaudémont's *hôtel*. I landed with my coxswain and told Mr. Hoste, the midshipman in charge of the boat, to lay on his oars and wait ten minutes. If I didn't get back in that time, he was to return to the frigate and direct my first lieutenant to take her out and report to you that I was killed entirely."

"Um!" said the admiral. "Did you find the admiral?"

"Found him with his back against a stone wall and the mob yelling in front of him."

"Did you rescue him?"

"Sure I did, or I wouldn't be here! Hell was let loose in that town last night, and we had a taste of it. Just when they were about to overpower us a young officer of artillery came riding up and interfered."

"What was his name?" asked Nelson.

"We did not find out, but I think, from what they said, it was the same who led the charge in the attack on Fort Mulgrave which caused our undoing."

"Ha!" exclaimed Hood. "The rascal has sense."

"He has that, sir. And a heart in him, too. He interposed to save us, quieted the mob, said he would take care of us, and then sent us off. We had a little scrimmage crossing another street, gained the boat, then the frigate."

"Did you bring off the little children as well, sir?" queried Hood.

"The little children, my lord?" asked Macartney, not comprehending for the instant.

"The granddaughter is about eighteen years old, I take it, Admiral," whispered Nelson.

"Oh, I see!" laughed the admiral. "Well, sir, what happened then?"

"Nothing, sir. We weighed anchor, made sail in fine style, and ran the batteries in shipshape fashion."

"Did you suffer any loss?"

"Nothing to speak of, sir. The main to'gallant mast, some of the standing rigging and running gear cut up, two poor fellows killed, and a half dozen wounded. We lost about fifty men, however, in burning the fleet."

"Where is the French vice-admiral now?"

"He is on my ship, sir, and he desires to be conveyed to Trieste. He is going to the Regent in Westphalia. I make bold to ask your lordship, if you have no

other duty for me, to be permitted to take him there."

"Macartney," said Hood, "I will be quite frank with you. You did a splendid thing in a thorough-going, seamanlike way with the French fleet. While you have only recently been posted captain, nevertheless I had intended to give you a ship-of-the-line for your action, but this after performance of yours dims the exploit. Sir," cried the old man, pointing his finger, "you had no business to linger in that harbor a moment after you had performed your duty! No, you had no right to risk his Majesty's frigate *Inconstant* for any French vice-admiral that ever flew a flag! Nor for his grandchildren, either. You are censurable for having done so. I intrusted that ship to you, sir. I did not intrust it to your first lieutenant. What his qualities were, or are, I am not advised. If you had been captured or killed, the safety of the ship would have devolved upon him. If your capture or death had been in the work of the service, not a word would be said, but you had no right to create such a crisis yourself by your action!"

"Yes, sir," answered Macartney with astonishing meekness, greatly perturbed by the old man's terrible outburst. "My first lieutenant, Mr. Frazier, is a very good man, sir. You can place every confidence in him, my lord."

"Doubtless; that's another question. And, Macartney," continued the admiral, more kindly, "I say this for your own good. That's your history all

through the navy. I have looked it up, I am familiar with it. It is a record of brilliant exploits marred by some after bit of foolishness, of Irish insubordination, of recklessness, which puts his Majesty's ships in hazard in pursuit of some private end. Comparatively speaking you are a young man yet. If you wish to rise in the service, there must be a change. You must have an eye single to your duty, to your duty alone, sir! I shall publish an order to the fleet commending the burning of the French ships, but I am unwilling to give you that ship-of-the-line at present."

"My lord," said Macartney, bravely, "you are quite right, sir. I thank you. Every word that your lordship has said is true. Your lordship's decision is eminently just, sir. I will mend my ways, if I can. But, Admiral — if you had only seen the lady, sir!"

"My God, sir," exclaimed Hood, throwing up his hands, "you are incorrigible!"

"No, sir, but I want you to understand the situation. And if your lordship will forgive me, with her a-tugging at my heartstrings all the time I never went near the place where I thought she was until I had performed the duty assigned to me to the very last ounce of my power."

"I am sure, Admiral," put in Nelson, kindly, "that no other man in the fleet would have got so many of the French ships as Macartney."

"Thank you kindly, Captain Nelson, but I doubt not there are many who would have done better. I only did my best, my lord, and as for the ship-of-the-line — well, Admiral Hood, I can only say she's worth it!"

"You graceless reprobate!" laughed Hood, his finger pointed again, but in a different spirit. "Well, I have given you good advice. I have given you my view of the situation. I suppose a pretty face goes a long sight farther than a word from an old sea dog. There, I will think about the ship-of-the-line later."

"Thank you, sir, and if it's all the same to you, Admiral, I would rather be in a frigate for a while, sir. There's richer pickings, if less glory, to be had in a tight frigate in the way of prizes."

"You're the first Irishman I have ever heard, Macartney, who cared tuppence for prize money in comparison with glory," exclaimed Hood, somewhat surprised and a little contemptuous of Macartney's sentiment.

"Sir," answered Macartney, stoutly, "I am as poor as Job's turkey. My ancestral estates have diminished to the vanishing point. I intend to settle down and be a family man. I want some of this world's goods while there's some to be had."

"Is it — pardon me — the vice-admiral's granddaughter?"

"It is, sir."

"What does the vice-admiral say?"

"He says, 'No,' sir!"

"What does the young lady say?"

"She says — well, not much of anything, only that she's for France."

"What do you say?"

"I say 'Yes!' my lord."

"If I know you," answered the admiral, smiling, "what you say will determine the event in the end."

"It will, sir."

"Very well. You may return to your frigate, and — hark ye, Macartney — when you want anything, come to me."

"And may I take out the vice-admiral to Trieste?"

"You may. Report to me as soon as you return. Don't strain the ship by rushing her too hard in going over, but hurry back. Success and a happy voyage to you!"

CHAPTER XIV

THE COMTESSE SAYS AU REVOIR

THE long voyage to Trieste was the most maddening experience that Macartney had ever experienced. He had anticipated many a delightful *tête-à-tête* with the woman he loved, but the astute old vice-admiral so contrived that never for one moment was the young comtesse alone with him. Some one was always by — the young comte, the old man, or, on a pinch, Aurore, who had received her instructions and faithfully carried them out. By no address was Macartney able to get a private word with Louise.

Now, no man, young or old, not even the resourceful marquis, would have been able to carry out such an arrangement if the lady herself had been unwilling to coöperate in the endeavor. She would have found means for seeing her lover alone had she desired it. Perhaps it is not quite correct to infer that she did not desire it, but her inclination was not strong enough to overcome her ideas of her duty toward her grandfather and her determination to devote herself to him and through him to her unhappy country.

"I am for France," she had said, and that, indeed, was no idle statement. It would be beyond the truth, however, to say that Macartney was indifferent to her.

She had stopped him by a timely appeal when he bent to kiss her in the cabin. That he paid such instant attention to her wish and had refrained when he might have gone on, was a source of joy to her; yet, she found herself blushing with the thought that perhaps after all she regretted her interposition. Macartney was a man of great personal charm. Like many Irishmen, he had a touch of the French *gaieté de cœur* which especially appealed to her.

The comtesse had all the pride of her birth, of her rank and station, and under other circumstances she would probably not have permitted herself to notice a simple gentleman; but, strangely enough, she lacked her grandfather's optimism as to the future, and fully realized that from being a great heiress she was now the granddaughter of an *émigré* who was practically penniless. In this condition, therefore, she had no advantage over the man who loved her. He had twice rescued her from death and from more than death. The last time he had displayed a gallantry and daring, and a devotion to her, which would have touched the heart of the most indifferent woman, and she was by no means that.

She could not forget, however, that he was an Englishman. For two hundred years her ancestors had been hating the English, and while circumstances had brought about a temporary alliance between the Royalists and the King of England, her inherited prejudices were too deep to give way lightly even under such novel conditions.

But then Macartney had assured her that he was an Irishman. She had said there was no difference, but she had discovered, perhaps by contrasting him with the other English officers whom she had met at Toulon, and on the frigate as well, that there was a difference. An Irishman was not the same as an Englishman, even though Macartney did wear the English uniform. Had it not been for that — he had said that he too was for France — if he really proffered his services to the Regent, for her lawful King — She permitted herself to dream of a future in which the man who loved her played a commanding part, and the dream was not unpleasant to her.

All that the comtesse lacked was time and association. In the very nature of things Macartney would have won her. He was as perfect a lover as he was a fighter, and he pursued the object of his aspirations with the same determination, impetuosity, and skill he would bring to bear if he were chasing a ship of the enemy. While he could not see her alone, and while it was difficult to express his feelings under the very eye and ear of the old vice-admiral, whose experience had made him very keen in affairs of the heart, yet the captain surrounded the woman with such an atmosphere of devotion that she drew it in with every breath she took. Insensibly she found her interest and her affections more and more engaged by his demeanor.

As has been said, Macartney had loved many times and oft. There was no doubt, however, in his mind that this time a real, genuine, lasting passion had found

a lodgment in his heart. The feeling with which he regarded the charming girl was persistent and unchangeable, save that with each passing hour it grew and grew. No woman could be indifferent to such devotion, much less a young and inexperienced girl, thrown for the first time in touch with a great passion. Outwardly the comtesse was passive, inwardly she thrilled to it, yet not sufficiently to commit herself to him. She quietly thwarted his manœuvres and tacitly refused to assist him in his endeavors to see her alone. She had not reached the point at which she felt that she could not live without him, and until she had reached such a point her duty and her determination were stronger than her heart.

The run to Naples, where they touched for water and supplies, was made all too quickly, and although Macartney would have delayed in the hope that fate or his mistress might relent and grow more kind, yet there was no excuse for lingering at that port, and after delivering his despatches to Sir William Hamilton they set sail and soon found themselves in the Adriatic. The voyage up that storied sea was as uneventful as the first part of the cruise. Ten days after their departure from Hyères the frigate dropped anchor off Trieste.

The vice-admiral determined upon immediately quitting the ship. He intended to go to Vienna, where he had friends, and there despatch a communication to the Comte de Provence, the Regent, to proffer his services and ask that functionary's pleasure as to his future

movements. He had no baggage to speak of. The whole party had been forced to content themselves with the clothes they wore when they left Toulon until they could make some few absolutely essential purchases at Naples. The preparations for the embarkation were soon completed.

Like all the sailors in the English navy the crew of the *Inconstant* had been taught to hate a Frenchman like the devil, but the vice-admiral was such a fine old seaman and gentleman that those who dwelt in the wardroom and steerage had learned to make an exception, so far as he was concerned, to the general rule. Perhaps the boyish frankness of the young comte, who spent many hours in the steerage with the youngsters of the vessel, and certainly the beauty and graciousness of the young comtesse, who could afford to be kinder to any one on the ship than to her captain, had made them all great favorites. Even the silent Brébœuf, so different from the typically voluble French sailor, had made friends in the forecastle — largely because he said nothing.

The officers, therefore, proposed to dispossess the seamen of their places at the thwarts of the cutter and row the old vice-admiral and his party ashore themselves. Macartney cheerfully gave his permission. The first lieutenant acted as coxswain. Although the captain would have greatly appreciated that privilege himself, etiquette forbade him, under the circumstances, to volunteer. As the moment for their departure approached the men were mustered in the waist, the

officers in full rig on the quarter-deck, Macartney at their head. The vice-admiral came from the cabin.

"Captain Macartney, Gentlemen," he said, stepping in front of the little group with his grandson and granddaughter by his side, "we are about to bid you farewell. You, sir, have rendered to his Majesty the King — God bless him! — a great service in the harbor of Toulon. You have also rendered me and mine personal services of the greatest value. In the unhappy state of my poor country the rewards which should certainly be yours must remain in abeyance."

Macartney made a movement as if to protest, but the older man stopped him.

"Nay, monsieur, by your leave, hear me further. Under other circumstances there were no warrant for what I am about to do, but things have changed greatly, and I am sure that my master will be but too happy to approve of my action. Sir, I am a Grand Commander of his Most Christian Majesty's noble order of St. Louis. As such I take it upon myself to name you a chevalier of that order, subject of course to the proper confirmation, which I shall make it my business at once to see that you receive. And, Monsieur le Chevalier," went on the old man, smiling, "if you will permit me to give you that title for the first time, I will honor myself, and I trust that I may pleasure you, by asking you to wear my own cross of the order until such a time as you may be privileged to receive the insignia from the hand of the King."

As he spoke the marquis detached from his breast

the cross of the order and fastened it to that of Macartney.

"Sir," said that young officer, bowing profoundly, hat in hand, before the marquis, "to have been of service to you" — his blue eyes shot one glance at the young girl — "and yours, is of itself reward enough. The honor you have vouchsafed to me overwhelms me. Should I be permitted by my King, as I have no doubt I shall be, to accept this decoration, I shall ever cherish it as a memorial of the happiest incidents and the happiest hours of my life. That the cross has been yours makes it the more valuable, Monsieur le Marquis, and I hope when the formal investiture is made I may be permitted to retain this" — touching his breast — "as a remembrance of a brave and gallant ally, once a foeman who has proven his courage and skill in every battle in which we have tried the temper of his sword. I ask no better fate than to have a chance like that again. Gentlemen, lads, all, three cheers for Vice-admiral the Marquis de Vaudémont!"

"Gentlemen, I thank you," said the vice-admiral, turning to the officers and men in succession. "I thank you on my own behalf, on behalf of my family, and on behalf of my King. Monsieur Frazier," he added, turning to the first lieutenant and bestowing upon him a purse of gold — and the old man had but little treasure at his command to give away — "will you distribute this trifle among the crew of *L'Inconstant*, with Chevalier Macartney's permission, and beg them to drink in their English fashion the health of their

friends, who, if war should ever come between the two kings would like nothing better than to meet and dispute with such brave men the supremacy of the sea. Messieurs, farewell."

"Gentlemen," cried the first lieutenant, turning to the officers behind him, "will you be good enough to man the first cutter?"

"This is a further honor," said the marquis, as he followed them to the gangway.

Hat in hand and sad at heart, Macartney escorted them. On leaving a ship the senior in rank always goes last. After the officers had taken their stations in the thwarts, Brébœuf saluted Macartney, for whom he had a great admiration, and, followed by Aurore, who dropped the young officer a courtesy, walked down the accommodation ladder. The vice-admiral motioned to his grandson and then turned to Louise.

The girl was very pale. She stood with her hands clasped in front of her; she was deeply agitated. Scarcely a year before she had been at school in the quiet of a convent. She had not reached womanhood, a glance revealed that, but the experiences crowded into the last year of her life had been so stupendous that they had developed her more rapidly than five years of ordinary existence.

She had been swept into prison in the Terror. Her father had been torn from her arms there and sent to the guillotine. The old vice-admiral, by the sacrifice of all that was left him, and by the exercise of tremendous courage and adroitness, had secured her

release and that of his grandson, the young comte. They had made that wild dash across France, and then had come the experiences of the past two months.

Macartney had come into her life. His love had enveloped her like the sunshine a flower. Was she for France, after all? Things looked different to her in the hour of parting. Did she love the man who loved her? Why was the thought of separation so bitter to her?

The vice-admiral was keen eyed. He read men and women as he read a book. Something of what was passing in the girl's breast he could understand. He looked from her to Macartney. The man was scarcely less pale and nervous than the woman.

The vice-admiral had not changed his views at all. He had not the slightest intention of recognizing this sailor, Chevalier of St. Louis though he had made him, as a suitor for his granddaughter, the Comtesse de Vaudémont. But if the vice-admiral knew the signs, that young man loved the young woman with a genuine passion. He was about to sever them. There was no probability that they would ever meet again. He could afford to be kind. He deliberately turned and walked very slowly aft a little space. The tacit permission was patent.

"Mademoiselle!" said Macartney, stepping nearer. The eyes of the whole crew were upon them, although of course they could not hear any of the conversation.

"Not now," said the girl. "I — I cannot bear it!"

"Will you think of me—will you not give me one word? Can I not hope?"

"I am f—" her voice faltered. The word died away in her throat. She bit her lip. "For—for France," she said bravely.

"Don't!" said Macartney, pleadingly. "Don't leave me without a word! Only one!"

The vice-admiral had turned and was coming toward the gangway. In another moment he would be beside them. She did not want to say it, but in spite of herself the word trembled on her lips.

"Adieu," she forced herself to whisper.

"Not that!" said Macartney.

"Come, my child," said the vice-admiral, taking her tenderly by the hand. "Adieu, Monsieur le Chevalier," he added, extending his hand to Macartney.

"Adieu, Monsieur le Vice-admiral."

Louise also extended her hand to him. He caught it, bent low over it, kissed it. Outwardly it was formal pressure; actually, through his lips passed all the feelings of his heart.

"Mademoiselle," he said softly, "for God's sake, a word, only a word!"

"*Au revoir*," murmured the girl.

Macartney drew back.

"Thank God for that word!" he said softly.

Escorted by her grandfather, Louise descended the ladder and took her place in the boat.

"Shove off!" cried the first lieutenant. "Out oars! Give way! Handsomely!"

As the cutter swung clear of the side of the ship a long lance of light leaped out from a gun forward, followed by a great burst of smoke and the report of a discharge. One shot succeeded another, until the full number of a vice-admiral's salute had been fired. The frigate was shrouded in smoke. The marquis stood up in the cutter, hat in hand, while the cheers of the men came faintly to him through the commotion.

Louise, too proud to seek refuge in that womanly vent for emotion, tears, stared eagerly back toward the ship with brimming eyes, and Macartney, standing motionless in the open gangway, the sunlight flashing on his brilliant uniform, gazed eagerly after the little boat that carried his heart to the distant shore.

There was a strange, unusual dignity about him; the pain of a great bereavement mingled with the exaltation of a great passion.

Book III

THE MEDITERRANEAN

CHAPTER XV

THE FRANCE OF IDEAS AND ITS MASTER

MAY-TIME in southern France — land of the minstrel and of the troubadour, land of love and romance, land of the birds and of the flowers. Sunshine and morning upon the heaving tide that washes grim-walled, cannon-circled, battle-scarred Toulon. Again great ships rise and fall on the swelling seas.

Five years have elapsed since a nation killed a King, struck down privilege, and sent aristocracy of birth reeling from its pedestal, that aristocracy of talent might rise to the point of vantage. That Republic at which kingdoms mocked and legions struck seems more of an assured fact to-day. The poor fatuous Regent is about to assume the royal title, since the little lad, most pitiful of children in history, whom men have fondly styled Louis XVII, King by the grace of God, is fast sinking into madness and death beneath the inconceivable treatment meted out to him by the cruel, merciless Convention's order — the boy's glory and his misfortune, his only merit, his only fault, being in his sonship to Louis, the *fainéant* of his race, and Marie Antoinette, who might better than her husband have worn the crown. Alas, the grace of God indeed!

But nobody minds what the Comte de Provence, the Regent, does, or does not; what he assumes or what he refuses. He and the Marquis de Vaudémont and their kind, in the presence of rapidly enlarging Republican France, stand dazed and futile before the steady advance of those ideas which they are so hopelessly inadequate either to understand or to assimilate. They have seen their plans fail, their hopes diminish, their dreams vanish. Their visions of the future are but baseless fabrics after all. Nothing is left them but a resignation they will not experience, an acquiescence in the grim realities of the present which they cannot give.

There is something in this Republic, then, which they have failed to apprehend. Madame Roland, mocking at liberty, has gone; Danton, with his audacity, has gone; Robespierre, the "sea-green incorruptible," has gone; Marat, "friend of the people," has gone. These all made their exit by the very same way — the way of the King, the way of the Queen, the way of nobility — a *via dolorosa* indeed, and as such has ever been a royal road. Yet the Republic remains. It has outlived them all. Will it survive everything? Is there nothing that can take the government out of the hands of the people once they have grasped it? Democracy has triumphed for five years. Will it triumph to the end — in France?

What are the present conditions? The Directory is there, the Convention is there, the guillotine, chief instrument of deliverance, is there. The new calendar

is still unchanged. Abolished God has not been re-established by legislative enactment. The jargon of affectation with which it was thought necessary to ring out the old and ring in the new still remains, though already falling into some disuse. "Monsieur" almost stands on an equal footing with "citoyen." Now "madame" and "mademoiselle" are coming back. Men are beginning to be dissatisfied. And there are other evidences of change.

For one thing is still the same as it was in the days when majesty and not the people ruled. Men must work while women weep; the world so runs away whether King or commoner is supreme in the land. The universal panacea for all human ills is not found after all in the words "*Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*," be they never so loudly proclaimed.

Thoughtful men have come to realize that the destiny of France is in the hands of a certain little captain whom we met at Toulon. Men are glad of it, too, for men love the little captain. And the question of the hour is, "What will he do with France — with us, indeed?"

The little captain is captain no longer. He has been reduced in rank, and men who serve under him, and would gladly die for him, call him "The Little Corporal." The name brings up the story of the bridge at Arcola; a slight boyish figure in a hell of fire carrying the flag, that tricolored flag, not only of France but of the new idea! The new idea which, despite even the genius of the little captain, wins in the end,

though it takes nearly a century before it finally triumphs — in France.

In command of the never-to-be-forgotten Army of Italy, the little captain has recently completed the most marvellous military campaign in all history. Alexander, Hannibal, Cæsar, Charles XII — he can lesson them all. There are no more worlds to conquer beyond the Alps and the Apennines, and he starts to-day, the 19th of May, 1798, with the very flower of the French in his train, for Egypt; where he would fain follow Alexander's route — and no Ganges nor Indus will estop him in his progress. He will strike England in that treasure-house of the ages, India and the Orient. He will bring the world of the East under his sway as well as the world of the West.

The march of ideas must go on even against the Sun! In his own words, "The genius of liberty which has made the Republic the arbitress of Europe declares that she shall be so to the most remote seas and nations."

And there in the brightness of the spring morning he stands upon the quay, where the hapless old men and young, the matrons and maidens, the children of Toulon, had fallen under the murdering hands of the *sans culottes*, himself energetically, wrathfully, but vainly protesting, five years before.

A small, a slender figure. If size were a criterion, he would be lost amid the brilliant staff which surrounds him. He is pale and emaciated. His long chestnut hair falls to his shoulders under his gorgeously laced

and feathered chapeau. The brilliancy of his uniform would attract attention were it worn by a lesser man, but one thinks of nothing in his presence but his face, thin, clean cut, stamped with the pride and the genius of a greater than Cæsar. Had he more flesh, were he not so thin, not to say gaunt, he were as handsome as a Greek god.

Not Jove himself possessed a more majestic brow, a firmer jaw, a more massive head; not the eagle a clearer, keener, colder eye — the grey-blue eye of the masters of men! Antinoüs himself had not more beautiful features. The one blemish in his appearance was in his complexion, which was slightly disfigured by faint traces of the ravages of an odious and disgusting disease — the itch. And it was this sickness which kept him thin and fragile, and gave the impression of poor health that he presented. At the siege of Toulon a man suffering that dread malady had been killed before him, and his blood deluging the little captain had given him the loathsome disease which the skill of physicians had not been able as yet entirely to eradicate from his system.

But those who judged him physically from his appearance were sadly mistaken in their estimate of his powers. In reality the man's frame was of iron — like his will. Indeed, nature had been kind to him. In addition to all of these attributes of ambition and command, she had given him that last completing touch without which greatness cannot be, and which, in default of a better name, men call magnetism.

The young general, for he was not yet twenty-nine

years of age, stood perfectly quiet on the quay at the head of the steps to the landing, yet there was something in the very atmosphere that surrounded him that evoked admiration and caused it to burst spontaneously into acclaim.

"Gentlemen," said he at last, "is all ready?"

He threw one swift glance about him, sweeping the crowd as he turned his head, and every man in the ranks behind him immediately felt that he had received a personal inspection which had searched out even the thoughts of his heart. He looked up toward the balconied window of one of the buildings overlooking the harbor. His keen glance detected there among many others a woman. By her beauty and her charm she was no unfitting mate for this Olympian Eagle. He lifted his hat, threw back his head, and smiled at her. His smile was as sweet as his face was strong, and Josephine bowed her head upon the window-sill and burst into tears. She was not alone in that. There were many women who wept as they gazed upon the cheering crowd. For most of them Fate had in reserve the bitter fortune of the bereft. For of all the vast multitude but few save the little general ever came back from that ill-fated expedition.

"Let us embark, messieurs," said the little captain, descending the stairs toward the barge awaiting him, which after he entered it immediately pulled away from the quay.

In his wake followed boat after boat containing his staff and the grenadiers of his personal guard—the rest of the party had long since repaired on board the ships.

Before them rose a great ship-of-the-line, the most magnificent vessel that had ever been designed to win the mastery of the seas. In compliment to this man's ambition the name *L'Orient* was traced in letters of gold across her stern.

As he mounted her towering sides the yards were manned and the cannon of her batteries thundered forth an imperial salute to the captain of the armies of the Republic.

Presently the boats were run up to the davits, signals were broken out at the masthead of *L'Orient*, capstans were manned, hundreds of brawny sailors heaved upon the straining cables, sails were dropped from the ponderous yard-arms, and slowly the vast armada of thirteen great ships-of-the-line, besides numbers of frigates, corvettes, brigs, gunboats and cutters, and hundreds of transports crowded with troops, got under way. Slowly they sailed down the harbor, past Fort Malbosquet, past promontory L'Éguillette, where the general-in-chief had first given assurance to the world that he was a man and a soldier; passed through the outer road, past Cape Brun and past the rocky promontory of Cape Garonne out into the blue Mediterranean, whose farther waters, beating on ancient shores, had been cut by Alexander's keels; whose waves had washed the streaks of Cleopatra's boats, or buffeted the bows of the galleys of Antony and the young Octavius. As of old, once more they upbore Cæsar and his fortunes!

And somewhere, beneath the distant horizon, cruised the squadron of Horatio Nelson.

CHAPTER XVI

"FOR YOU AND FRANCE"

THROUGHOUT the teeming years crowded with such events as have been rarely compressed within a similar period of time, Macartney had borne a stirring part. He, in his stanch frigate, had made a name and reputation for himself than which, among the lesser lights of that brilliant epoch, there were none higher. Electing to remain in his frigate he had not been able to participate in the aged but heroic Howe's battle with Villaret-Joyeuse on the "glorious first of June," 1794. Nor had he been with slow-going Hotham and chafing Nelson in the Mediterranean when the latter took the *Ça Ira* and *Le Censeur* from Admiral Martin in 1795. Neither did he follow stout-hearted Jervis off Cape St. Vincent in 1797 when he dashed through the Spanish fleet, where Nelson laid the foundation stone of that series of prodigious exploits which made him the admiration of the seamen of the world then and thereafter. Nor was he with stanch old Adam Duncan when he crushed the sturdy Dutchman at Camperdown later in the same year.

These were places for ships-of-the-line, and while Macartney and the *Inconstant* might have been attached to one or the other of the great fleets with which

Britain proved her lordship of the sea, he had sought for and had obtained a roving commission, more in consonance with a temper which chafed at restraint and acted most brilliantly when alone. The *Inconstant* had harried the Mediterranean and swept the narrow seas. Prize after prize had been taken and sent in, some of them of great value, and the account with the Admiralty Commissioners to Macartney's credit in prize money was a constantly increasing one. He never touched a penny of it, and it amounted at the opening of the year 1798 to the enormous sum, to him, of thirty thousand pounds.

The temper of the man had materially changed. He had before been a gay, careless, insouciant Irishman. He had become a cool, determined, persistent, and ambitious man. He ruled his crews with an iron hand. There was no more efficient body of men on any ship in the King's service than those he commanded. In spite of his stern and rigorous domination of them the officers and men adored him. In the first place, he was a brilliant success. As has been noted, the record of the *Inconstant* for prize money was greater than that of any ship in the service. In the second place, he was as brave as a lion, and if there is any quality in a commander that appeals to a subordinate, especially to a sailor, it is that of courage. The man's daring was unbounded. In the third place, he was a seaman *par excellence* in a day which produced a body of captains to which there is no parallel save in the American sea kings of 1812–15.

Macartney had lived so long on board the frigate, handling her under all conditions of weather and locality, that he grew to know her as a husband the wife he loves. There was no trick of his profession of which he was not master. There was no demand in pressing exigency to which he was not equal. The *Inconstant* kept the sea for longer periods than were usual in the service, but during their infrequent sojourns in port for refitting or repairing, her men had more money to spend and therefore had a better time. To be a member of her crew was a hall mark of aristocracy on the water. The Inconstants carried themselves in the cockiest way, compared to the crews of other less fortunate frigates, who hated them heartily. They were as ready to uphold their claim as the paragon ship of the service, on shore among friends, as at sea among enemies.

Nor had the career of the *Inconstant* been entirely taken up with the capture of prizes alone. She was as ready for a fight — in that at least the Irishman had not altered with the passing years — as she was for a chase. In five years fortune had vouchsafed her four opportunities for distinction.

She had actually cut out with her boats, from the Great Road at Toulon, a heavily armed sloop-of-war surprising her at anchor, confident in the protection of the batteries. She had next captured, after a running fight of several hours, a man-of-war brig and a heavy corvette, singly no match for her, together bringing a much greater number of men and a heavier weight of

metal to bear upon her. Macartney's brilliant seamanship had enabled him to separate the two ships, strike them alternately, and finally bring them both to a surrender. He had been offered a ship-of-the-line for this, but had declined it. His third exploit was the capture of *La Dame Blanche*, a frigate of force slightly less than his own, although a practical match for the *Inconstant*, after a half hour of brilliant fighting.

His last and greatest achievement had been a stand-up, old-fashioned fight, yard-arm to yard-arm, with a heavily manned French razee, *Le Quatorze Juillet*, of fifty guns. The razee had been totally dismasted, half of her people killed and wounded, her guns dismounted, her hull riddled like a sieve, before she surrendered herself to her smaller antagonist. The *Inconstant* herself was not in much better condition. The defence of the other ship had been desperate, and her heavy guns had worked fearful havoc upon the frigate. Macartney had been seriously wounded toward the close of the action.

The two vessels were patched up somehow, and when the frigate limped into Portsmouth Harbor under a jury foremast, dragging after her the sinking hulk of the razee, England rang with the splendid exploit. There had been a baronetcy in one of the branches of the Macartney family, a creation by James II when he was in Ireland, which had lapsed, and King George III was graciously pleased to revive it for the benefit of the captor of *Le Quatorze Juillet.*

Again Macartney was offered a ship-of-the-line, with

a promise of a rear-admiral's flag at the next promotion, and again he refused. Indeed, he had been permitted to fly a commodore's broad pennant for a year. He would wait until he got a rear-admiral's flag before giving up his invaluable and beloved frigate, which was docked and thoroughly repaired for further service. And there was a reason other than the success he had won in her that made him cling to his ship.

For five years he had been pursuing an end with a singleness of purpose, a persistence, astonishing to Nelson and those who had known him in years before. He was the very antipodes of the name of his frigate. Such constancy of devotion he had not dreamed himself capable of, for before his eyes daily throughout the period that had elapsed had been the picture of a woman. Warm in his heart he had her lovely face as he saw it that morning when she said good-by to him at the gangway of the ship.

Responsive to the legend beneath his coat-of-arms, "*J'espère*," his heart beat with hope. He loved her as he loved the light of heaven; he loved her as he loved the heaving sea; he loved her as he had never loved home, nor country, nor friends. He loved her as he had never loved man nor woman. She had hallowed his ship by her presence. Until he became an admiral he would never leave it. The silent cabin where she had dwelt spoke to him of her. The decks he daily trod had been pressed by her foot; in the shadow cast by the towering pyramids of canvas she had stood and marked the rush of water sparkling alongside.

For her the guns had thundered. For her the wind had sung its songs through the tracery of rigging and of spar. Unlike every other captain in the service, he had abandoned his gig, and made the cutter which had brought her to and carried her from the ship his own boat on all occasions. When he captured a prize, it was for her. When he struck mightily upon the enemy, it was for her. When he suffered from the wound which had stricken him down in the moment of his greatest victory, it was for her. When the King's sword had been laid upon his shoulders, the thrill of pride which filled his heart was for her. Everything that tended to bring him the material things of life, to give him honor and distinction, to add to his fame, to increase his station, was for her — only for her.

For this man loved Louise de Vaudémont as he loved his God. So deep was his passion that it could feed and grow great upon remembrance alone. So great was his affection that it nourished him with hope. It was not possible that to such a love there should not at last come a complete fruition. His thoughts were intense enough to bridge the seas and cross the mountains and awaken response in her heart.

There was little that was tangible upon which he could build his hopes, however. He heard of the marquis, but infrequently. The old man was too great a personage to be entirely unnoticed by the world. Like most of the exiles, he journeyed from

land to land, from court to court, in the interests of his master. Once, in London, Macartney had met him at the King's drawing-room. The marquis had received the young man kindly. Was he not a chevalier of the Order of St. Louis, a brother in arms and devotion as it were, for the act of the vice-admiral in investing him with the Cross of that order had, of course, been immediately confirmed by the proper authorities. And had not Macartney been a friend in need? The old marquis did not forget his friends.

From him Macartney had learned something of the family. Honoré was a lieutenant in the Austrian army, which had fought so bravely, but so unsuccessfully, against General Bonaparte in Italy. The comtesse was still unmarried.

"She has not lacked suitors, Monsieur le Chevalier," said the old man.

"I can well credit that, my lord," said the young man, gravely.

"To all of them she turns a deaf ear. She has but one answer —"

"'I am for France,'" softly quoted the Irishman.

"Yes, monsieur, for France. Alas, my poor country! Who would think it? The restoration of the King seems farther off than ever. The boy King will die without ever coming to his throne. They murder him there in Paris, the slaves, the cowards! I question sometimes, even, whether he who will be Louis XVIII will ever — but no, there is a God in heaven, monsieur. The right will have its way."

"God send it may be so," answered Macartney. "Will you take a message from me to the comtesse?"

"What message, monsieur?" asked the old man, suspiciously.

"The same, my lord, that I gave her on the ship," answered Macartney, boldly. "The same that you refused to allow me to hope I should ever receive a favorable answer to, but for which I live, nevertheless. I love her, my lord. I have not forgotten her nor ever shall. I have served my King, and incidentally yours, to some purpose, monsieur, and if I live I shall do more. It is all to make myself worthy of her."

"You will have to rise high and do much," said the marquis, proudly, "to merit to stand by the side of a de Vaudémont."

"Give me leave, my lord. Were she a peasant girl and I a king, I would strive just as I do now for name and fame and riches to be worthy of her. For the rest, a gentleman is a gentleman, the world over. There be differences in station, but the degree is the same."

"Upon my word," said the marquis, touched in spite of himself, "you have the spirit of a brave man, *Mon Chevalier*. I do not bid you hope. My decision is not changed, but such constancy merits some reward. I will take your message, sir, as you have spoken it."

"And should the comtesse marry —"

"That is as it pleases the comtesse herself," answered the marquis. "'Tis not the custom in France, but I have refused to put constraint upon her in that matter."

"Then when peace comes, may I —"

"I can give you no encouragement, no permission, monsieur. Even were circumstances other than they are, I would fain not have her wed an Englishman. But of all Englishmen that I have met I still say that I prefer you."

"And I am an Irishman," said Macartney, smiling.

"Yes," answered the marquis, "perhaps that is why I feel so."

Macartney had written to the woman he loved whenever occasion served, which of course was very infrequently, and whenever he could get her address, which was more infrequently still. Once in a long while he had received a brief acknowledgment, a little conventional note, written as if under the pressure of a powerful appeal and in spite of the warnings of conscience. These letters breathed prayers for his welfare, carried a thanksgiving to him for his thought of her. They were more precious than rubies to him.

Once, after the capture of *Le Quatorze Juillet*, for which he had been given his baronetcy, he sent her the tricolor which he had hauled down when he had beaten the great ship to a standstill. It had been drabbled in the blood of brave men as it had lain upon the gory deck. Macartney had folded it up with a copy of the *Gazette* giving an account of his action and stating the rewards he had received, across which he had written in his bold, flowing hand four words; and he had sent it to her by a special messenger, who was charged to find her if he hunted all over Europe and spent a fortune in the pursuit.

She was at Vienna at the time. When the package was laid at her feet, the messenger withdrawing for the moment, on recognizing the writing her hand shook so that she could scarcely tear off the wrapping. As she gazed upon the hated flag of the Republic and read what her lover had done, she lifted the paper to her lips and kissed it where he had written "For you and France." Before she realized what she was doing, she wrote him a half dozen words, which meant more to him than all the formal acknowledgments and greetings she had sent him in four years: —

"Monsieur, I wait. I hope — for France and — " The sentence was ended in a dash. Her hand trembled when she wrote at the bottom of the page "Louise de Vaudémont." After she had given it to the messenger and he had gone beyond recall, she would have given worlds to have recalled and destroyed the letter. But in truth the splendor of such a gift in such a way had dazzled her. It had been nearly a year since she had heard from him, and she had lost control of herself for the time being.

With every woman of France, she had done what she could for the Royalist cause. The old man, in default of a son, for Honoré was busy in the army, had come to lean more and more upon her; she was invaluable to him as secretary, as counsellor, as stay, as comfort. She had indeed been "for France," as she had declared, but she was no longer for France with absolute singleness of heart, for she loved Macartney. Whether anything should ever come of it or not; whether under

happier auspices she should ever listen to his wooing with a beating heart; whether she should ever be able to give herself unreservedly to him or not, was a grave question. But at least she could love him.

Daily she approached the Divine in his behalf. For him she turned that deaf ear of which the marquis spoke to those who sought her hand. They were many. The penniless granddaughter of a penniless exile had the potent talisman of her beauty to bring the world in which she moved to her feet. With pardonable vanity, she sometimes stood before her glass and wished that Macartney could see her now. For, if he loved her then, what would he think of her to-day?

The promises of her earlier years had been marvellously fulfilled. She had blossomed into a perfect woman, nobly planned. A true ocean daughter, she; the blue of the sparkling sea shone in her eye, the gold of the sunlight gleamed in her hair. The strength and vigor of the salt air had given her health and power and grace. She rode the storms of life as buoyantly as the ship which had given her birth had done. A true daughter of wave-washed Brittany, a fitting bride for a sea king.

Brébœuf adored her. She was the reincarnation of the young matron he had followed from the iron shores of Finistère to the smiling hills and valleys of Provence when she had left Morbihan a bride. Aurore, most devoted of humble friends and familiar companions, would have given her life for her. It was a

lonely life the comtesse led. Lacking the companionship of her own sex and urged by old affection and intimate association as well, she made a confidante of the Provençal woman. There must be some one to whom she could unburden herself concerning her growing passion for the Irishman, lest her o'erfraught heart would break. It was to Aurore, then, that the girl poured out her soul.

When the old marquis delivered the message Macartney had given him at London he had watched his granddaughter keenly. Under his severe scrutiny she had not been able to preserve her impassivity, the artificial calmness of her rank and station. The blood had leaped into her face at the words her lover said. She had been forced to turn away in confusion, unable to sustain her grandfather's penetrating gaze. Well versed was the old man in the ways of men and women, and his heart sank with pity at the uselessness of it all as he looked upon his granddaughter.

"My child," he said, firmly, but with tenderness, — he was loath to give her pain and there was little of happiness to the exiles then, — "your way and this man's way lie apart. He can never be anything more to you than he is to-day."

"Here he is enough to me to-day, monsieur," answered the girl, with some of his own directness and courage, laying her hand on her heart as she spoke.

"Do you — care so much for this man?"

For answer she put her face in her hands and turned away.

"I — love him," she murmured. "But there — have no fear, my grandfather — I am for — France." She smiled piteously through the tears that trembled on her lashes. "We will say no more about it, if it please you, sir."

CHAPTER XVII

THE REPUBLICANISM OF BRÉBŒUF

THE destination of the expedition of General Bonaparte, the invincible young soldier of the Republicans, had been concealed from every enemy with extraordinary care and success. Few knew for what purpose the gigantic armament collected at Toulon and a few near-by ports was designed. That something important was in the air, however, which would take General Bonaparte from France was well understood in the chancelleries of the various powers who were arrayed openly or secretly against Republican France.

It was evident to the wise heads who governed European politics that the individual most to be reckoned with in fighting France was the young general who had immortalized himself in Italy. It was patent also to the Comte de Provence, soon to call himself Louis XVIII of France, that if a blow was to be struck for the restoration of the Bourbon kingdom, no better opportunity could be found than that presented by the absence of Bonaparte on his great expedition. That was obvious to every one, even to the fattest and most stupid of kings.

La Vendée, then as always loyal to the crown, the great stronghold of the last remaining opposition to

the Republic, though outwardly peaceful, was again ready to revolt. The Marquis de Vaudémont had offered to go there as the representative of the King and endeavor to raise nobles and peasants, equally devoted to the Bourbon cause, in rebellion against the Republic. With Bonaparte adventuring somewhere on the sea, they felt certain of success.

Honoré de Vaudémont, with a few adventurous spirits for assistants, and with the sanction of the Regent and of his grandfather, of course, had entered upon a perilous but promising undertaking of his own, which was no less than the abduction of Bonaparte. For this purpose the young man had resigned his commission in the Austrian army and enlisted in the French army under the name of Captain Honoré. Influence and the judicious expenditure of money had even secured him a lieutenant's commission on the personal guard of General Bonaparte. It was hoped that some opportunity might arise during the general's absence in which he might be seized and turned over to the Royalists. Some of the more desperate in the plot had inclined toward assassination, but Honoré de Vaudémont was too noble for murder and that idea had been given over. When Bonaparte had embarked in the *Orient*, therefore, Honoré had been one of the soldiers detailed to that ship.

Pursuant to the plan, the marquis, accompanied by his granddaughter, who positively refused to be left behind, repaired to Genoa, incognito, of course, and then had taken passage for himself and the comtesse

and the two servants on a small Spanish brig bound for Brittany. They sailed from Genoa on the 20th of May. According to the best advice they could obtain, Bonaparte would not leave Toulon until nearly the 1st of June. This, the marquis calculated, would enable him to reach Brittany and La Vendée just as the dreaded French general took his departure.

Unfortunately, however, the armada sailed on the 19th of May, and they had the ill luck to be overhauled by one of the convoying line-of-battle ships on the extreme flank of the great fleet. The officer who boarded the Spanish brig at once perceived that the marquis was a Frenchman. That he was of the old régime was as apparent as the other fact. The brig was detained and the marquis was ordered to board the ship-of-the-line in question.

The French ship was a magnificent vessel called *Le Tonnant,* rated as an eighty-gun ship. She was commanded by the marquis' ancient enemy, Master Jean Garron, now capitaine de vaisseau in the Republican navy. Overjoyed at his opportunity, Garron detained the marquis, sent an armed boat-crew to the Spanish brig, had the comtesse and the two servants brought to the ship, signalled to the admiral that nothing of importance had been found on the prize, and quietly kept to himself the fact that he had taken some prisoners on board his ship.

The marquis, instantly realizing the predicament in which he was thus involved, would have killed Garron on sight had he not been deprived of his weapons

immediately he had boarded the ship. The officers who had fetched the comtesse and the others to *Le Tonnant* had told her nothing save that her grandfather had been detained and desired her presence. She had gone willingly, of course. What was her horror and surprise to be met at the gangway, hat in hand, by the man she had never forgotten, for he had caused the death of her father, and whom she hated and despised above all others for that and because he had aspired to her hand. Her grandfather stood by, outwardly imperturbable, inwardly overwhelmed with rage and dismay.

The captain offered his hand to the girl as she came over the side, but she turned from him with a haughty gesture, refusing to touch him. Brébœuf, who came last, was of course infinitely astonished. He had accustomed himself, however, in the service of the marquis, to the habit of self-control so in accordance with his nature, and he betrayed no emotion of any sort. He did, however, come to a sudden and astonishing resolution. On occasion Brébœuf could think as swiftly as he spoke slowly.

When the eye of the Breton fell upon his master and Garron, when his mind grasped the situation, the impossible happened. While Garron stared at him with an evil, sinister glance, the sailor walked deliberately up to the marquis and struck him a smart blow upon the breast. Had the heaven itself opened, the old noble could not have been more astonished. Then the Breton turned to Garron.

"*Vive la République!*" he said.

The captain laughed venomously.

"So your old servant has turned at last, has he?" he cried. "That's a brave lad! He's seen the light. Will you serve the Republic?" he asked, turning to Brébœuf.

The man nodded. He had already spoken more than he usually did, and did not intend to waste any more words. Garron knew him and his habits of old.

"You are tired of this *ci-devant* marquis, eh?"

Brébœuf nodded again.

"They all desert you, Citizen Vaudémont," cried Garron. "I will take you into my service, Brébœuf. You can attend personally upon me, worthy citizen. Is that what you would like?"

Brébœuf nodded so violently that one might think that his head would be shaken off.

"Captain Dupetit-Thouars," continued Garron, "take these people to my cabin for the present."

Dupetit-Thouars, *capitaine de frégate*, the executive officer of the ship, with a look of intense disgust on his handsome face at his captain's insolence and discourtesy, bowed low before the marquis and signed to him to precede him toward the cabin. But the marquis stood petrified with amazement, staring at Brébœuf.

"You, you!" he cried at last, "who for years have eaten my bread! You, whom I thought as faithful, as loyal, as myself, to take advantage of this opportunity! *Mon Dieu!* Give me a sword, some one, that I may kill the slave!"

"Ugh! You traitor!" screamed Aurore, dashing at Brébœuf with uplifted hands as if she would hurl herself upon him, which indeed she was only prevented from by the interposition of two of the sailors, who seized her and held her firmly.

"Come, monsieur," said Garron; "be calm, Aurore."

"Brébœuf has deserted us," said the marquis, slowly turning away. "There is no longer loyalty in man!"

The Breton rolled his eyes, moistened his lips, and stared after the retreating forms of his master and mistress. A gulp, a convulsive effort, and finally he managed to growl out in his deep voice four words, which they heard as they entered the cabin: —

"*A bas les aristocrates!*"

Surely he was becoming voluble!

Again Garron laughed that ugly laugh. Beckoning to the Breton, he stalked after the others toward his cabin, while the ship rang with laughter and cheers for the new, if belated, convert to Republicanism.

The opportunity which Fate had furnished Garron was one that he meant to use to the fullest limit. At the first sight of the young comtesse, his old determination to make her his wife had instantly renewed itself with an astonishing accession of desire.

Master Jean Garron was already married. Among the women who watched the sails of the armada whiten the horizon from the shores of Toulon had been his wife — a woman, like himself, of the people, and much too good in every way for such an imponderous rag of circumstance as the captain of *Le Tonnant*.

The fact that he was married, however, was of no importance whatever in Garron's eyes. Divorce was a matter of easy arrangement in France at that time, and it would not be difficult for him to secure his freedom. Nor was he certain that he really cared to secure that freedom. If he could get possession of the young girl without the formalities of a marriage, or by and through a ceremony which would not stand too severe a scrutiny, he would not hesitate to avail himself of the opportunity. It were more agreeable to have her come to him, if unwillingly, at least of her own motion ; but that she should be his, willy-nilly, he had immediately determined. What love he was capable of was given to his lawful wife, a woman who had been thoroughly congenial to him, but to whom he would not hesitate to be unfaithful.

He was moved in his present determination by the remembrance of the marquis' former treatment of him; by the instant knowledge that in no way could he so powerfully affect the old nobleman whom he so bitterly hated as by taking possession of his granddaughter ; and last and more powerfully by the beautiful maturity of Louise de Vaudémont, whose glorious womanhood awakened every sensual passion in the man's mean and vulgar soul.

Not to mince matters, Garron was a brute. His importance in France had greatly diminished in the five years that had passed. With the march of ideas, in which in spite of her excesses France led the world and the age, he had not kept step. In times of social up-

heaval many things come to the top which, when a final adjustment has been effected, must return to the bottom. Every revolution is proportioned in its excesses to the degree of oppression which has brought it about, and the misgovernment that ensues represents with much exactitude the misgovernment that preceded. It takes time for the ideal to master the idea. Before new fabrics can be erected upon encumbered ground the old fabrics must be torn down. To tear down is always a ruthless and a fearful pastime. Yet it is one in which the basest and most ignoble sometimes bear the leading parts. To build up is godlike. It is divine, and only the great can do it. When havoc is cried and the dogs of war are slipped, it takes a master hand indeed to bring them in leash again.

The master hand was there in France, and considering all that had occurred it was working with astonishing quickness. Although it had not yet firmly grappled the reins to guide the State, it had made a magnificent beginning. Time would come when the Garrons would be relegated to their proper places with the ignorant, the incompetent, the brutal, the ruthless, the timid, and the hesitant.

Had Jean Garron possessed real talent, or even a mediocre capacity, he might have been flying a flag by this time. As it was, he was lucky to retain his rank. The master hand had not yet devoted itself to the consideration of the sea, being busy with interests on shore, or Garron would have been consigned to obscurity, living or dead, long since. Finding his influence

vanishing more and more, he had resolved to enter into a correspondence with the English from motives of self-interest which can be easily understood. He had the foolishness to undertake this under the very touch, as it were, of that master hand, which well shows Garron's mental caliber.

He had longed for an opportunity of betraying the destination of the expedition of which he was a part to the English, but in the first place he had not known it until the last minute, and in the second place no safe means of communication had hitherto presented itself. What he lacked to consummate his treason to the Republic was opportunity. That would come sooner or later. Opportunity, however coy she may be under ordinary circumstances, has an unhappy fashion of presenting herself too promptly to men with such ideas in their minds. She was preparing a way of destruction for Garron.

While waiting his chance for treason he determined to enjoy himself with the marquis and Louise. The baggage of the de Vaudémont party had been brought aboard. It had been deposited in the captain's cabin, and Garron had broken open the portmanteaux in the presence of Dupetit-Thouars and had then examined their contents also. As luck would have it he found two papers. One was the plan of the projected uprising in La Vendée of which the marquis was the head. Another was a memorandum of the conspiracy to kidnap General Bonaparte which Comte Honoré was endeavoring to engineer.

Here was enough to hang the whole party to the yard-arm without delay. Indeed, both documents were of the greatest value. The rebellion in La Vendée would be a serious menace to the State. The conspiracy of Comte Honoré threatened the life of him whom his countrymen regarded justly as the hope of France and whom many people looked upon as the apostle of ideas and the ideal government throughout the world.

Garron's proper course was plain. He should instantly have laid both documents before his commander-in-chief. In the interest of his private design, however, he chose to keep them to himself.

The day after the capture of the marquis and his party Garron caused them to be summoned to his cabin. *Le Tonnant*, like most of the French eighties, was fitted for a flagship. He occupied the admiral's cabin, and the vacant captain's quarters were given to the marquis, more through the insistence of Dupetit-Thouars than from any desire on Garron's part to make them comfortable. Dupetit-Thouars, who came of a noble family of Brittany, and who had been a midshipman under de Vaudémont in the East Indies, had adhered to the cause of the Republic from conscientious scruples. He had been promoted rapidly until he had reached his present position. No more gallant officer, no better seaman, ever trod a ship's deck then he, and it was a galling circumstance that he found himself under the command of such a *vaurien* as Garron. Indeed, the captain was detested thoroughly by the whole of the crew, and it was only Dupetit-Thouars' strong personality, and the cor-

responding attachment felt for him by the crew, which maintained any discipline at all on the ship-of-the-line and prevented it from becoming a hotbed of mutiny and disaffection.

Garron, who realized more or less of the situation, did not unnecessarily cross his powerful subordinate, and had sulkily acquiesced in the latter's insistence that the marquis and his party be quartered in the vacant cabin rather than in the steerage, where Garron had first indicated they should be disposed.

With the marquis were his granddaughter and Aurore, for the latter had absolutely refused to be parted from the comtesse, although some effort had been made to get her to go forward with the women of the ship — and there were a number of unfortunates aboard the fleet, both forward and abaft the mast. Among other supplies for the comfort and delectation of the expedition a troop of ballet girls had been embarked by direction of the commander-in-chief. The seamen had not been slow to follow the example, under tacit permission, of their officers, and the ships were floating brothels. The French navy was not unique in that particular, however. Such conditions obtained to a more or less degree everywhere then. Aurore had sworn to throw herself into the sea if she were parted from Louise, and again Dupetit-Thouars had intervened so that her wishes had been granted.

CHAPTER XVIII

GARRON HAS HIS PRICE

THE marquis found Garron seated at a table in his spacious cabin. *Le Tonnant* was an old ship which had been completely rebuilt in the last year. She had formerly been under the command of the marquis and had once flown his commodore's broad pennant from her masthead. He knew her thoroughly. In her cabin he had almost felt at home. It was with a sense of shock therefore that his eye fell upon the squat, sinister, black-browed figure seated where he himself had sat years before.

"Citoyen Vaudémont, be seated. The women," with a glance toward Louise and Aurore, "will stand."

"While you remain seated," returned the marquis, "we will all stand."

"As you please. In pursuance of my duties as an officer of the Republic I have searched your baggage and have found this —"

The marquis was outwardly as impassive as if cut out of marble, although he at once recognized the papers which Garron held up and which it had been a great imprudence for him not to have destroyed. Being more of a sailor than a diplomat the marquis had forgotten that the thing that is reduced to writing is

practically told to the winds. His heart rose in his throat as he saw in a flash the consequences of Garron's discovery. They would of course be laid instantly before Bonaparte. His grandson would be condemned and executed; his own life would be forfeited; the rebellion in La Vendée would be put down before it had had time to accomplish anything at all.

And Louise! Alone on this ship in the power of this man!

For once the marquis had played the fool. He had laid the stakes on the board and then put all his cards in his adversary's hand. The game, however, was not quite played out. Perhaps he could kill Garron where he sat and destroy the papers. They would kill him, but the rest would go free and the Royalists in La Vendée would not be discovered. He made a quick step toward the captain. He was without a weapon, of course, but such was his passion and rage that although nearly seventy years of age he felt that he could strangle Garron with his own hands. Nothing at all in the marquis' demeanor save that quick movement toward Garron had betrayed what was in his mind. The nobles of France lived behind a mask in those days. It was a part of their creed, but Garron instantly divined what the marquis would do.

"Brébœuf," he called sharply, and the marquis found himself looking into the barrel of a pistol held by his ancient servitor. The Breton's hand did not tremble. With a dark, inscrutable face he glanced along the weapon, which was pointed straight at the marquis'

head. Another step and the marquis would be a dead man.

Nor would he have effected anything whatever by his endeavor. The old man stopped, shrugged his shoulders, took from his pocket a jewelled snuff-box, and elaborately helped himself to a pinch.

"You do not offer me a pinch of snuff, Vaudémont," said Garron, resentfully.

"I take snuff only with gentlemen, monsieur," returned the marquis, calmly.

"My God!" shouted Garron, bringing his hand heavily to the table.

"Is there a God in France, my good Garron?" queried the marquis. "I thought the Republic had abolished God?"

It was very dangerous thus to bait his captor, but for his life the marquis could not resist. The man became purple with rage. He tore at the stock around his neck. The marquis smiled satirically, turned away, and looked indifferently out of the nearest port. The comtesse shrank nearer to him and laid her hand upon his arm. He patted it gently and reassuringly and then Garron spoke again.

"You don't seem surprised," he said, recovering himself as best he could and returning to the papers.

"Pardon, monsieur, I am surprised — ah — that you could read them. That is all," said the marquis.

"Perdition!" shouted the captain. "I suppose you know what I am going to do with them?"

"I know very well what I should do with them."

"What is that?"

"What any officer loyal to a cause, however mistaken it might be, would do."

"And that is?"

"Lay them before General Bonaparte at once."

"What good would that do me?" asked Garron.

"No good at all, monsieur," answered the marquis, quickly, who began to see that possibly there was a chance for him after all. "No good whatever, my good Garron. You would have your thanks for your pains. There are persons whom I need not mention who would give a great deal of money for those documents, and for my unworthy life as well, and it may be that such an argument might appeal to you."

"And do you think I am to be bought?"

"I do not think, I know you are," said the marquis, with quiet contempt.

"We'll see," said Garron, brutally. "The only question is the price."

"Ah!" said the vice-admiral.

"There is the price!"

As Garron spoke, he rose and stepped toward Louise, at whom he pointed his finger. The girl did not shrink from him. She faced him as boldly, as coldly, as the marquis himself, although her heart quivered at the man's approach. The marquis deftly stepped between the two.

"You ask too much, monsieur," said the old man. "We prefer the other alternative, whatever it may be."

"We'll see about that," said Garron. "I am in no

hurry. I'll wait until we get to Egypt and get rid of these soldiers — until we have the ship to ourselves and General Bonaparte is busy on shore, and then — we'll see!"

"And you think your value will be enhanced by our association with you, Garron?"

"I don't think anything about it," said the man, roughly, "all I know is that you give me the comtesse, or she gives me herself, or these papers go to General Bonaparte. You know what would be your fate then?"

"The yard-arm, I suppose," said the marquis, shrugging his shoulders; "well, 'tis not pleasant, this hanging death, I believe, but after one is dead it makes but little difference how one is killed. Although the method is one that does not commend itself to a gentleman, it will doubtless serve. Besides, we have been looking death in the face daily for so long a time that to me at least it is not unwelcome."

"And how about the young comte?"

"He knew the risk when he entered upon this undertaking," said the vice-admiral.

"And the young comtesse?"

"She, too, can die."

"Die! Curse you!" laughed Garron. "Who said she was going to die! She shall live, and when I am through with her she'll go forward to the crew."

"Monsieur, if you venture to lay a hand upon me," cried the young girl, "I will kill you and then myself!"

"You all talk well," answered Garron, looking hatefully from one to the other, "but I am master, and in

the end 'tis my will, not yours, that will determine what happens."

"I demand, as a prisoner of war, to see Admiral Brueys, or General Bonaparte," said the marquis. "He at least is a soldier and does not war upon defenceless women."

The old man intended to confess to Bonaparte the whole situation, realizing that he was bound to hear it anyway, and then appeal to him to protect his granddaughter. The vice-admiral shrewdly realized Bonaparte's position in France. He could not withhold from him a certain meed of admiration, although the existence of the little general was the most serious obstacle to the restoration of the monarchy for which de Vaudémont was earnestly and zealously laboring. Like a wise captain he had studied from every available source the character and characteristics of the successful general.

He intended to offer his own life in forfeit, and if necessary that of Comte Honoré, and by this means he hoped to save Louise and also to establish a claim to consideration for the revolutionists in La Vendée who had been betrayed through his mistake. An appeal to the magnanimity of General Bonaparte he felt sure would bring about a mere nominal punishment for them. Hence his demand of Garron.

"You are my prisoner," returned the captain of the ship, "and I will send you to Admiral Brueys or General Bonaparte when, or if, I please. Meanwhile you will stay aboard this ship. If you communicate

what I have said to you to any one, I swear to God that I will take mademoiselle by force and you can look on! As to her killing me, I'll attend to that. Now, you can go! Confine yourselves to your cabin and the quarter-deck until I determine what's to be done."

The honors of the interview certainly, if result be a criterion, were with Garron. There was nothing for the marquis to do but go. He was helpless in the face of the other's position. There was one thing, however, he could do. Perhaps he could pay back a traitor for his treason. Nothing since the death of their King had so affected the vice-admiral and his granddaughter as the defection of Brébœuf. The marquis would have staked his soul upon Brébœuf's firmness and loyalty. He would have sworn that the rocks of Provence could change as soon as he.

The whole affair had come so suddenly upon him that at first he had scarcely been able to realize it. Indeed, he had sought for an explanation and had half persuaded himself that it was some mistake, but when he found himself looking down the barrel of that pistol he was convinced of the reality of the man's desertion. There was, indeed, no hope for France if loyalty like that of Brébœuf could so suddenly give way. The marquis racked his brains for a circumstance in their intercourse which would give him some clue to his servant's astonishing conduct, and found none. As a matter of fact, he realized that until they stood together upon the deck of *Le Tonnant*, Brébœuf had had no opportunity during the five years to make such a declara-

tion. It was his first chance and he had embraced it. Well, the marquis would pay him back, so far as he could, before he left.

"Monsieur Garron," he said as he turned away, "I will give you a word of advice. Do not trust the man behind you. He served me and mine for years, only to betray me yesterday. What he would do to me, that he would also do to you." If the marquis could sow dissension between the two, Garron might make it unpleasant for the Breton. "If my hand had held that pistol I would have shot him down like the dog he is."

"You hear, Brébœuf," laughed Garron, "how your former master thinks of you?"

"Ah," growled the old sailor, with something of a snarl in his tones like that of an angry wolf.

"Have no fear for me, Vaudémont," said Garron; "I can take care of myself, and Citizen Brébœuf has just realized the blessings of liberty. He is my friend, not yours. Now, go!"

CHAPTER XIX

THE SHIPS OF NELSON

EARLY in May, 1798, Captain Macartney was summoned on board the *Ville de Paris* by signal. The *Inconstant* had been temporarily attached to the blockading squadron of Admiral John Jervis, Lord St. Vincent, off Cadiz. Indeed, he had only that morning reported his arrival to the admiral. Knowing that he possessed one of the fastest frigates on the seas, Jervis had instantly selected him for an important duty.

"Ah, Sir Robert," said the veteran old sea dog as the Irishman entered the cabin, "is the *Inconstant* ready for service?"

"As always, my lord."

"Has anything appeared on the narrow seas that has the heels of her?"

"Nothing yet, sir."

"How would you like to go into the Mediterranean and attach yourself to Sir Horatio Nelson's squadron?"

"I should like nothing better, Admiral."

"Very well. Here are despatches which I wish you to deliver to Rear-admiral Nelson with the least possible delay. You will find Nelson's squadron, which comprises the *Vanguard* with the *Orion* and the *Alexander*, somewhere in the vicinity of Toulon, I believe.

Perhaps he may have been joined by the *Leander* by this time. The French are going somewhere from there, but where the devil it may be no one knows. Nelson left here on the 9th to find out. I do not mind telling you, Macartney, I am directed to detach ten ships-of-the-line and send them to Nelson. This order in effect gives him an independent command of a fleet in the Mediterranean, with instructions to run down Bonaparte wherever he may go. Would you like one of those ships-of-the-line?"

"I should indeed, my lord. But perhaps I can be of more service in my frigate. If Sir Horatio has to chase the French fleet, provided it goes out, he will be sadly in want of frigates, sir."

"Yes," said Lord St. Vincent, "and I am detaching five, the *Caroline*, the *Flora*, the *Emerald*, the *Terpsichore*, and the *Bonne Citoyenne*, to follow you to him. I shall put these under your orders, subject, of course, to Rear-admiral Nelson's command."

"Thank you, my lord."

"While doubtless more glory might be gained in one of the capital ships should Nelson fall in with the enemy, as he must certainly do, you are right. You can do him greater service with the *Inconstant* and the others than with a ship-of-the-line. Almost any competent sailor can command a ship-of-the-line creditably, but it takes a rare man to be a perfect frigate captain and scout. I will tell Nelson in this," said the old admiral, reopening the paper, "that I am sending him the best man and the best ships that I have under my command.

May God grant that all may go well with him in the service demanded of him!"

"You need have no fear of that, my lord, I make bold to say," answered Macartney.

"I have none," said Jervis. "You may tell Nelson for me that he has an opportunity for distinction such as has never before been presented to a man of his years and service."

"He will embrace it, my lord."

"I am sure of it," said the old man. "Tell him that the squadron of capital ships under Captain Troubridge will follow you in a day or two and should join him within a week after you deliver the orders. Don't let anything French get hold of you until you have seen Nelson."

"Trust me for that, sir."

"I know there's little danger," said the other, "for the eastern end of the Mediterranean is pretty well cleared and I shall keep the Spanish and French bottled up here without fail."

"Sir," said Macartney, "I would deliver those despatches to Lord Nelson if the seas swarmed with the cruisers of the enemy."

"By God, I believe you would!" laughed Jervis.

"Ay, ay, sir. There's nothing afloat that can overhaul the *Inconstant*."

"And it would take a big ship," answered Jervis, "to cause you to strike, wouldn't it? Well, good luck to you. I shall remember your willingness to retain the frigate."

This is how Macartney happened to be once more under the command of his old captain. Now in these days of telegraph and printing presses nothing in the way of military manœuvres can be very long concealed, but it is a fact that so far were the English from knowing for what point the French armada was destined that they did not actually learn until a week after it had taken its departure that it had left Toulon. Nelson in the *Vanguard*, with the *Alexander* and the *Orion*, was still cruising off the harbor when Macartney gave him the despatches. It had been some years since the two men had met, but the ancient friendship had been so warm that they were delighted to be together again. Nelson gladly welcomed the approach of the Irishman. He was sadly embarrassed for the want of scouting ships. He was radiant with joy at the news that he was to be reënforced and given a free and unrestricted swing in the Mediterranean.

The fleet which Jervis had prepared for him was ideal. When the new ships joined he would have under his command thirteen 74's, the finest in the service, and a fifty-gun ship, besides the five frigates for which Macartney had not waited. The frigates indeed joined him a day or two after the arrival of the *Inconstant*, and the whole squadron continued its blockade off Toulon.

On the 19th of May, the very day of the French embarkation, although the fleet seeing the approaching storm had anchored in the Great Road, the weather being very threatening, the English ships were made snug for the night and bore away before the wind.

They were of course ignorant that the French had embarked and were only waiting for favorable weather before putting to sea. After dark it came on to blow one of the most terrific gales that had ever swept over the Mediterranean. The *Vanguard*, in spite of daring seamanship and heroic endeavor, lost her main and mizzen topmasts and finally her foremast. With consummate skill Nelson, and Berry the flag captain, managed to clear the wreck, wear the ship, and get her head pointed away from the lee shore.

The storm was so violent that no assistance could be rendered the flagship by the rest of the squadron. When morning broke there she was, apparently a ruin. The other ships were scattered in various directions. To signal them was impossible. The captains of the frigates, who had been beating up desperately against the wind in an endeavor to keep company with the others, concluded, after seeing the plight of the *Vanguard*, that the fleet would be compelled to run for Gibraltar to refit. Without orders they accordingly squared away for that port to ease their ships before the wild gale and were soon out of sight below the horizon.

There were two exceptions to that manœuvre. One was the brig *Mutine*, a French prize under the charge of Commander Hardy, the other the *Inconstant*.

"I thought Hope," said Nelson, sadly, referring to the commander of the first of the flying frigates, as he watched them disappear below the horizon, "would have known me better than that."

He instantly divined the course of reasoning which had caused them to scamper away. He turned his glance with pride toward the *Inconstant* and *La Mutine*. Their commanders were made of better stuff. They were men of his own school. Nelson had no thought of leaving his station. He never left a station so long as the keel over which he flew his flag could float.

As soon as possible Captain Ball, in the *Alexander*, which was nearest to Nelson, made fast a hawser to the shattered *Vanguard* and attempted to tow her away from the shore. The wind died down during the manœuvre and the heavy swell which followed the storm drifted the two ships down upon the stern and rocky coast. There was not wind enough to enable the *Alexander* to tow the vast dead weight of the helpless *Vanguard*, and Nelson repeatedly signalled to Ball to cast off the hawser, abandon him, and save his own ship.

There had been bad blood between Ball and the admiral, but the noble captain of the *Alexander* refused to avail himself of his superior's permission and entreated that he might be allowed to hold on.

To all of Nelson's directions and orders that he abandon the ship, Ball turned a deaf ear. Nelson became angry with him at last, and finally broke forth in fury, repeating peremptorily his commands. Finally Ball seized the trumpet and called out to the admiral: —

"I feel confident that I can bring her in safe. I therefore must not — and by the help of Almighty God, I will not — leave you!"

By the exercise of splendid seamanship, and favored by a slight increase of the breeze, he succeeded in getting the two ships out of their dangerous position, and finally on the 23d of May he brought the *Vanguard* safe to Sardinia, where the *Orion* and the *Inconstant* and *La Mutine* speedily joined them.

"A friend in need is a friend indeed," cried Nelson, going aboard the *Alexander* so soon as the anchors were down and embracing his stubborn but devoted subordinate.

Nelson immediately despatched the *Inconstant* to Toulon with instructions to find out and report to him any movement of the French fleet. With the aid of the other ships-of-the-line he proceeded to repair the *Vanguard* where she lay. Working like the Britons they were, they completely refitted the flagship, but with a jury rig of course. They used a spare maintopmast for a new foremast, a maintopgallant mast took the place of the foretopmast, and so on.

When the repairs had been completed, the flagship had a strange, stumpy look under her jury rig. Originally a very swift ship, perhaps the fastest in the navy, even with her diminished sail she was able to keep up with the rest. If she had been taken to a dock, the repairs would not have been completed in four months. At the end of four days she was ready for service. This was not the least of Nelson's achievements. He could not afford to dispense with the services of even a single ship.

He was in a fever of impatience during the four days, too, which was not relieved when just as the squadron got under way they were met by the *Inconstant* coming down from Toulon under a tremendous press of sail. Macartney, knowing the importance of his news, was driving her to get the best he could out of her. Long before he was within speaking distance flags were flying from her masthead. The admiral could scarcely wait until the signals were read to him.

"The French left Toulon Roads on the 20th of May!"

It was now the 27th of May. The armada had been gone a week. Although the expedition numbered thirteen ships-of-the-line, some of them of the largest size, and countless numbers of frigates and corvettes, Nelson instantly determined to pursue them with the three ships in his command. Before he could show a signal, however, another set of flags was flung to the breeze by the *Inconstant*, and the admiral received the cheering intelligence that Troubridge's squadron of battle ships was close at hand. Macartney was summoned on board the *Vanguard*, publicly thanked for the information he had obtained, and complimented for the promptness with which he had attended to the matter.

No one knew where the French had gone. They had headed eastward from Toulon. At the same time the main body had left Toulon, other divisions of the armada had sailed from Genoa and Corsica, joining the fleet *en route*. What could be their destination? The genius of Nelson at once fathomed it. It could not be outside the Mediterranean. There was no place which

presented an adequate field for the operations of such an expedition beyond the straits of Gibraltar. England and Ireland were alike impossible. Should they attempt to pass that way, they would be gobbled up by the huge fleet of St. Vincent. The north shore of the Mediterranean afforded no objective worth considering. On the south shore the only possible destination was Egypt. Egypt was on the way to India! The French had long maintained colonies there. Bonaparte might intend to extend his conquests over that land again. England was more vulnerable there than anywhere else.

Failing Egypt, the armada might be headed for Constantinople. Nothing much would be gained by going there, however. In Egypt Bonaparte would be on the flank of Turkey and on the direct road to India. Egypt was the gateway to the East. Genius fathomed the plans of genius. To Egypt, therefore, Nelson would go.

Being joined during the day by the other ships appointed to his command, Nelson was not without hope of overtaking Bonaparte on the way, provided that he met with no unforeseen delays. The rate of sailing of a vast and heterogeneous fleet like that which rumor accredited to the French would necessarily be slow. Nelson had under him the compactest and finest fleet that floated the ocean. He gave orders to Macartney in the *Inconstant*, lamenting more than ever the defection of the other frigates, that he should not wait for them, but that he should endeavor to get on the track of the French, learn their course by whatever means

he could, and report to him their whereabouts and their destination at the first opportunity.

Thus the tremendous pursuit began. Every man's heart was filled with elation. Sooner or later they must catch the French fleet. Sooner or later, either at anchor or under way, a battle must be fought,—a battle which should astonish the world. Bonaparte had shown himself invincible, a very god of war, upon the shores, and Nelson thirsted to test his temper upon the seas.

"I should love," he said, "to try Bonaparte on a wind!"

With the ships which had been sent to him there was absolutely no fault. The men who commanded them were the pick of the British navy. All of them had enjoyed long experience in war, the majority of them in command of ships. Most of them had sailed with Nelson, many of them had been his companions-in-arms in desperate encounters upon sea and shore. He and his captains were allied not merely by bonds of service but by ties of friendship. As he himself said on that cruise and in the battle which terminated it, "I had the honor to command a band of brothers."

Before they started out, just after Troubridge's squadron joined them, Nelson summoned his captains to the *Vanguard*, talked over the situation with them, and then got under way.

CHAPTER XX

FRIENDS ON *LE TONNANT*

MACARTNEY, in full possession of Nelson's conclusions that the French must be bound for Egypt, carefully considered his course. From the position of Nelson's ships as they had sailed from Cagliari, Sardinia, back toward Toulon, and from the course taken by Troubridge with the reënforcement, it was evident to him that the French must have gone to the northward of Corsica, and thence southward between that island and Italy. It was not likely that they would waste time by stopping at Naples or Sicily, but it was more than possible that Malta might be their destination. Perhaps he could get news of them there. Nelson, he knew, intended to follow the course of the French round Corsica, so far as he could obtain information concerning it.

Macartney determined to run direct for Malta along the western side of Sardinia. Between Sicily and Africa the Mediterranean contracted to its narrowest width. If he could get there before the French fleet, they could hardly pass without being observed by him, especially if they were headed for Malta. If they disdained Malta and went straight to Egypt, they might pass through the Strait of Messina, although

that, considering their numbers and the difficult navigation entailed by the narrow strait, was hardly likely. For Sicily, therefore, he laid his course, and as the wind was favorable he made tremendous progress.

Few ships were ever driven as was the *Inconstant*. Yet if he had had the faintest suspicion that upon the decks of one of the ships he was striving to come up with he should find Louise de Vaudémont, the pace which to his ardent impetuosity seemed slow enough would have driven him mad.

The run to Sicily was made without any mishap or adventure. He spent two days in beating across to Cape Bon on the North African coast, and then finding nothing he ran for Cape Passaro. He heard nothing there and determined to try Malta next. On the evening of the 20th of June he made a landfall, which his navigation determined to be that island. He ran along the northern side of the island for the harbor of Valetta.

The night was dark and rainy. The wind was blowing a half gale. Macartney had set his maintopgallant sail over a reefed maintopsail in his determination to drive her to the last limit. Going at a terrific speed he ran slap into the French fleet in the darkness. They had seized Malta and occupied Valetta and had that very day taken their departure for Egypt. The French ships were distributed over the ocean in great disorder for miles. Before Macartney realized it he was hopelessly mixed up with the scattered flotilla.

He did not yet despair of extricating himself from

his predicament, however, and to that end brought to bear all the resources of his seamanship and skill. He might have won clear of the mass of ships into which he had first burst, but just as he fancied he had open water before him he ran into another division. In the darkness and confusion one of the largest of the French transports, a ship which had been in the East India service and was almost as big as a ship-of-the-line, crashed into him in spite of all he could do to avoid the collision. The shock stove in the side of the frigate to the water line just abaft the foremast. The foretopmast was carried away and the maintopgallant mast speedily followed. The dashing and beautiful *Inconstant* was almost a wreck.

Still her commander did not despair. The ship which had run into him had sheered off in the darkness. No one of course could tell that she had been in collision with an English ship. If no more French came that way he might get off. The men of the *Inconstant* worked with feverish energy to get the ship in serviceable condition again. But to no avail. She had been so strained by the force of the blow that she made water badly, and every wave flooded her through her shattered broken side. Only toiling at the pumps enabled them to keep her afloat. They had managed to rig a jury foretopmast and set some sail on it, but when morning came she was a sorry hulk indeed.

Right in her track came a belated squadron of French ships, the rear division of the armada. There were a number of transports convoyed by two or three frigates

and corvettes and a ship-of-the-line. Seeing the bedraggled wreck of the *Inconstant*, two of the French frigates ran down toward her and demanded her surrender. It was useless, of course, but Macartney could not give up his ship without a fight. He stood off the two ships desperately, dismasted one, and seriously cut up the other, until the whole squadron came swarming down upon him. Then the ship-of-the-line took a hand and ended the unequal struggle by a broadside which completely wrecked the *Inconstant*.

Macartney had been seriously wounded and lay senseless on the deck. There was no flag to haul down, for none had been flying. Over half his crew had been killed and wounded. Not a gun was serviceable, and the ship was in a sinking condition. The boarders from the ship-of-the-line took possession of the frigate without further resistance. It was impossible to save her. Her crew were distributed as prisoners of war throughout the French squadron. Her captain in an unconscious condition was taken aboard the ship-of-the-line.

Nelson had lost his only frigate and Macartney had failed to give him the news.

They were kind enough to the English captain when they got him aboard *Le Tonnant*, for that ship it was which had captured him, and at Dupetit-Thouars' suggestion he was passed below into one of the spare staterooms opening from the captain's cabin occupied by the other prisoners. The de Vaudémonts had been sent below during the action, much to the disgust of

the marquis, and they knew little of what had transpired until the senseless form of the English captain was brought into the cabin.

Macartney's face was grimed with powder and covered with blood, from a nasty scrape of a piece of langridge along his forehead, and no one recognized him. When the surgeon of the vessel had examined him and pronounced his wound in the shoulder serious, though not mortal, Louise de Vaudémont, with her grandfather's permission, had offered to assist in taking care of him. She could do no less indeed for one who had been fighting the battles of her King against the Republicans and had been wounded in the service.

War and its horrors had been brought close to her more than once, as it had been to many women during the pregnant five years that had elapsed, and she was not without experience in dealing with wounds, which would stand the patient in good stead. Dr. Lapierre was most willing to avail himself of her services, and he at once conducted her to the cabin and instructed her what was to be done until he came again. There were several Frenchmen on the ship-of-the-line who had been wounded by the *Inconstant's* last broadside who needed his attention.

Thus it happened that when Macartney opened his eyes after a little space he saw bending above him the lovely face of the woman he adored. He stared at her in complete bewilderment, a curious puzzled look in his eyes. Then he lifted his hand to his face and laid it across his eyes as if to shut out the vision. As he did

so his fingers touched the bandage. He felt it carefully with his hand. Recognition swept across his countenance.

"Ah — my ship," he said faintly. "We — were caught by — the French fleet. Yes — we made a good fight — but that last broadside — did for us. What ship is this? How came I here?"

He was translating his thoughts into words. He opened his eyes again. His glance fell once more upon the face of the woman he loved bending over him. He stared and stared.

The heart of Louise de Vaudémont rose in her throat and beat so that she felt as if it would choke her. Her bosom heaved. Her body shook with agitation. If she had had any doubt or hesitation before, she realized now her love for this man. France and the King? They were as nothing — love was all. He was speaking again.

"Comtesse," whispered Macartney, "is it another dream? I have seen you often so — Louise."

"Monsieur," murmured the girl, her face aflame with color.

"My God!" exclaimed the man with sudden strength, lifting himself on his unwounded arm and staring. "Did you speak? Are you alive? Is it indeed — "

He stretched out his hand toward her. She was bending close above him and did not shrink away. His hand fell upon her shoulder. She did not move.

"Yes," she said, "it is I."

"Alive? Here? What happy chance — "

"Hush!" said the woman, laying her finger lightly upon his lips. "I — you lost your ship. You remember? They brought you here. I am a prisoner like yourself."

"I had rather die than lose that ship," said Macartney, faintly, "yet to find you — what will Nelson do? How I have loved you all these years! If I could have only taken you away! Oh, if there was some way to carry the news! And to see you again! You — you! Yet if I could only let the admiral —"

"You are exciting yourself, monsieur," said the woman with gentle insistence; "the surgeon gave me strict orders that you were to say nothing. You must lie still. You have been badly wounded. You must be quiet. Perhaps I would better —"

"You won't leave me? You won't go away?" cried Macartney. "I shall die if I lose you now! If you will only stay here by my side — just let me look at you! I will promise — there! Sit down. I shall say nothing. There's nothing to be said but that I love you."

"And to that I cannot listen, monsieur," returned the comtesse. "I — am —"

"Don't say again you are for France," cried Macartney; "you have been for France so long, now be a little while for me."

The comtesse smiled at him, but made no answer.

"Monsieur!" she called after a moment, rising and turning to the door. "If you will step hither, you will find an old friend."

Presently her grandfather came into the cabin.

"What! Monsieur le Chevalier!" he exclaimed.

"Even so, my lord," said the young man.

"And you, Louise?" asked the old man, apropos of nothing apparently, looking keenly at his granddaughter. And well he might, for such radiant beauty and happiness as she then exhibited he had never before seen upon her face.

She fairly illumined the room with her joy. Her grandfather had read such signs before in other women and easily recognized what they meant. What wretched fortune, he thought, had brought this persistent Irishman upon them at this juncture? Yet in spite of himself he found a flickering hope rising in his breast at the sight of the man.

Their situation had daily grown more desperate. Garron apparently had not ended it summarily because he was greatly enjoying the daily torture that he inflicted upon the marquis, although he would have enjoyed it a thousand times more if the marquis had given him any outward sign of his inward anguish.

Garron had managed affairs nicely indeed from his standpoint. He held the marquis with an iron hand, and not even the siege of Malta and the considerable delay there of the squadron afforded the latter any respite. Indeed, Garron had concealed from every one outside his ship the quality of his prisoners, and in the confusion which was always present in a French fleet, and especially in that one, embarrassed as were the authorities by the overwhelming details of the vast

expedition, nobody paid any particular attention to him or his ship, which was from his point of view well, from that of others, exceeding ill.

Try as he might, the old man could not think of any way by which he could extricate himself, or rather his granddaughter, — for he cared nothing for himself, — from her awful predicament. The appearance of Macartney — helpless, wounded, though he was — put new life into the marquis' veins. Twice in imminent crises the Irishman had brought salvation. Like most of his class, the marquis was something of a fatalist. Perhaps, through Macartney, salvation had come again. If so, what then ?

Such constancy of devotion as the young man maintained and exhibited toward what was after all scarcely more than an ideal pleased the marquis greatly. He was not too old to remember his youth. That Macartney had remained faithful during the past five years to the memory of a woman whom he had seen but a few times appealed to the old man's pride. He had not changed his own views as to the suitability of an alliance very greatly, but conditions had changed about him.

He felt now that he would never live to see a king of the ancient, the rightful, line upon the throne. His dignities and properties could never be restored to him unless he were willing to pay a price from which he shrank with a repugnance that could never be overcome. The price was an allegiance to, and acknowledgment of, the French Republic — perhaps not even then !

Would it not be better to allow his granddaughter to consult the wishes of her own heart and marry the man she loved, even though he were a foreigner, than to sacrifice her happiness in some of the alliances of more seeming advantage which had been proposed to him? Well, that was in the future.

Meanwhile the marquis had not the heart to interfere. He did not realize that the determination of events had at last been taken out of his hands and these two irresistibly came together as the rising tide embraces the shore. Not old age with its authority, nor materialism with its calculation, nor the shadowy claims of ancient rights, could work to keep them apart.

"Monsieur Macartney," he said at last, "for your sake I am sorry to see you in so desperate a case. For our own, I am glad you are here. You have been our good genius. Perhaps you can help us again."

"Are you in trouble, monsieur?" asked Macartney.

"We are prisoners, sir. But you cannot bear this now. To-morrow. Then you must grow strong to help us — to help mademoiselle yonder."

"Is she in danger?" cried the young man, half rising from the bed. "If so, I am well."

"Not yet, not now," said the marquis, quickly, while Louise laid a restraining hand upon her lover's shoulder. "You will be of good service to us, to her, I am sure, monsieur, so soon as you gain your strength. But that must come first. You will hear all to-morrow. Meantime, I believe we are in no immediate danger. And perhaps you can save us. You have done so twice before."

"And if I do, my lord," asked Macartney, eagerly, "what then? What reward shall I have?"

"Do the gentlemen of England, Monsieur le Chevalier, serve demoiselles in straits for a reward?" asked the marquis, gravely.

"No, my lord," returned Macartney, shamefacedly; "you reprove me well, sir. I will do it for love of her — with no other thought."

"Who knows," said the admiral, tapping his snuff-box and looking quizzically down upon the wounded man, "if you succeed, in love you may find reward after all."

The Irishman stared at Louise, and the woman dropped her head and turned away under his beseeching glance. He could see nothing but the color that wavered in her cheek. The admiral smiled.

"Now there must be no more talk," he said, "or I shall stay with you myself."

"On my word," said Macartney, quickly, "I will be silent. I am happy just to look at mademoiselle."

With a pleased laugh and a lighter heart than he had carried for weeks the vice-admiral left them alone.

CHAPTER XXI

PLAYING AT HIDE AND SEEK

MEANWHILE, driving his fleet, considering the relative quality of the heavier, slower ships, something as Macartney had driven the *Inconstant*, Nelson was hurrying down the Mediterranean after the French. He would have given his soul for the frigates which had run off to Gibraltar. Of necessity he was compelled to keep his battle ships in a somewhat compact formation. If he had had the frigates that ill luck and bad judgment — are they synonymous? — had deprived him of, those lighter ships would have been placed far out on either side of the fleet so as to spread a broad clew by which he could sweep the seas and so come in touch with the enemy.

On the 22d of June two French ships were seen on the horizon, and the *Leander*, which was far to starboard of the rest, dimly detected the outlines of a French battle ship off Cape Passaro. Nelson, however, did not learn that latter fact until some time after. As a matter of fact the French armada was close at hand. Not a dozen miles intervened between the two fleets, and the booming of signal-guns on the English fleet was distinctly heard by the French. The night was dark and rainy, and the French immediately swung to the northward and by rare good fortune escaped discovery.

What Nelson's fleet would have done if let loose at sea upon that vast French armada can scarcely be imagined. A conflict so horrible would have ensued, with such a frightful loss of life among the frigates and helpless transports, as never has been paralleled on the sea. The French were fortunately spared that catastrophe, for Nelson abandoned any further search of the sea, confident in his conclusion that the ships must have gone to Alexandria. Therefore he repaired to that port without further delay. The speed of a compact fleet of battle ships was necessarily greater than that of a heterogeneous number of vessels of different kinds which made up the French armament, and the English were soon far ahead.

The French had no positive information that Nelson was on their track. They had kept away from the sound of the guns from motives of prudence. Macartney, lying helpless in his berth, which happened to be upon the windward side of the ship, had heard the distant firing. He had noted the quick change of course, and had with a seaman's prescience divined that Nelson was there.

Oh, how he had prayed to be once more on the deck of the *Inconstant*. No one had told him as yet that the brave little vessel which had been so interwoven with his career had sunk beneath the sea. He would have given half his life — everything but his hope of heaven and his claim upon Louise de Vaudémont — to have been able to run across the track of his admiral with the momentous tidings which would lift such a load from Nelson's breast.

And Nelson wondered and wondered what had become of his most trusted subordinate, Macartney. He reasoned it out finally that the Irishman must have been captured and that he had nothing in the way of tidings to expect from him, else he would have heard long since.

On the 29th of June the English fleet sighted the coast of Egypt. They ran along the shore line past Marabout and the old harbor, past the promontory bearing the Pharos of Ptolemy which had looked upon the ships of Antony and had welcomed the flying flotilla of Cleopatra, past the new harbor, and then swept into the Bay of Aboukir, searching the low sandy shore with the same intensity as the first fierce glow of the tropic sun above their heads.

Nothing was there, no sign of the French. Not a ship, not a vessel, save those usually trading in the harbor. They spoke with pilots who put off from the shore and learned that no news of any prospective expedition had come to Egypt. The land was as peaceful as if no enemy lurked below the horizon.

Despair seized Nelson's heart. He gave way to one of those fits of depression to which he was liable. He had made a mistake! His judgment had been at fault! Egypt, after all, was not the destination of the French fleet. Where in Heaven's name could they have gone?

He did not tarry, he scarcely paused, before Alexandria, but bore up for the Syrian coast in a sweep around the north shore of the Mediterranean. He was like a man crazed with a fever in his wild anxiety to find the

French. If he had only waited, confident that he had fathomed Bonaparte's design.

Scarcely had the mastheads of his liners disappeared beneath the horizon when the sails of the van ships of the French armada rose upon his track.

On the 1st of July the French dropped anchor off the little town of Marabout some five miles to the westward of Alexandria. By the shallowness of the water they were forced to anchor several miles from the shore. There Bonaparte learned that the English under Admiral Nelson had beaten him to the harbor. The news was frightfully portentous. Where had the English gone? Would they come back? Were they even now heading toward him? Fortune had favored him. Was it about to desert him now?

The surf was breaking heavily upon the shore. The wind was rising. The great ships tugged uneasily at their anchors. No one knew the value of time better than Bonaparte. The debarkation of the army under such circumstances would be perilous, but not a moment was to be lost. Any hour might bring the English down upon him.

"Five days, give me five days!" prayed the little captain, hastening the landing of the troops with all his fiery energy.

Fortune still smiled upon him, his lucky star was in the ascendant then as it had been heretofore during the cruise. The landing was effected safely without molestation. Indeed a whole month elapsed before the hated English swooped down upon the French.

The city of Alexandria was taken by assault, the army marched to Cairo, the battle of the Pyramids was fought, the mamelukes were defeated and broken, the country was subdued, and the first step of that dream of conquest which would fain end in the Orient was completed.

And still no English ships whitened the horizon with their stained and weather-beaten canvas.

Where was Nelson?

Book IV

EGYPT

CHAPTER XXII

GARRON'S PROPOSITION

UNDER the skilful attention of the French surgeons, and the careful nursing of Louise de Vaudémont and her foster-sister, Macartney rapidly recovered from his wound. When *Le Tonnant* dropped anchor off Marabout with the rest of the ships, he was able to be upon deck again.

He had been fully advised of the fearful predicament in which fortune, or misfortune, had placed the marquis and his grandchildren. As yet he had seen no way to extricate them. One thing he could do. He swore to himself that, rather than see the woman he loved forced to submit to the demands of Garron, he would kill that worthy with his naked hands. Ay, even though a thousand deaths were to be visited upon him in consequence.

Macartney racked his brains for some other scheme or expedient which would enable him to circumvent the designs of the malicious knave. And in vain.

Fortunately for all of them matters for the present continued about *in statu quo*. For one reason Garron, in common with the other French captains, was intensely busy with the various duties concerned with the debarkation of the army. He shirked all he could, but there was so much to be done that it was impossible

for him to avoid everything. Affairs were in such a state of confusion that he had no real privacy upon his own ship as yet. Circumspection was in order. After matters had settled down somewhat and resumed their normal condition he would have leisure to prosecute his further designs without observation or interruption.

Garron took just enough notice, therefore, of the marquis to keep that gentleman fully convinced that he had abated no jot or tittle of his pretensions toward the comtesse. He had not sent the incriminating papers to Bonaparte. He had not informed him of the plan to make away with him. He kept these things to himself. It amused him to play with the vice-admiral. The vice-admiral was a dangerous man to play with under other circumstances, although conditions made him practically helpless now.

In his undertaking to make the life of the old man a hell on earth, Garron made one fatal mistake. He forgot that he was also playing with France, and, what was more dangerous, playing with Bonaparte. Woe be unto him if that little captain should ever discover his temporizing and his hesitation!

If Garron was hated by his crew, he was despised by Vice-admiral Brueys and his subordinates and his brother captains in the French fleet. Many of these, although they had given their allegiance to the Republic, were brave and gallant gentlemen. Had it not been for Garron's influence — wavering but still considerable — with the Directory, Brueys would

have insisted upon his detachment from the ship, the command of which would have fallen naturally to Dupetit-Thouars. Consequently, after the transports and smaller war vessels had found shelter in the harbor of Alexandria and the fleet was left to itself, no one, unless moved thereto by imperative duty, boarded *Le Tonnant.*

Bonaparte, with an instinctive knowledge that sooner or later the indefatigable Nelson and the English would be upon him, had ordered Brueys to do one of three things. Either come into the well-defended harbor of Alexandria and moor his ships under the cover of the French batteries; or sail for the Island of Corfu and there establish himself in what was believed to be an impregnable position; or else move to the eastward into the Bay of Aboukir, some ten miles from Alexandria, and there station his ships in the best defensive position possible.

Brueys found that it would be impossible to get ships of such size as those he commanded into the harbor of Alexandria; there was scarcely enough provision in the fleet for them to go to Corfu; therefore, he contented himself by partially obeying that last direction, which promised the least immunity from danger! He moved up to Aboukir Bay and dropped anchor. Bonaparte, meanwhile, had left the coast and was busy with his campaigning and administering affairs in the interior.

Garron had taken but little notice of Macartney, heretofore. The Irishman had been astute enough

not to allow the slightest suspicion of his intimacy with the de Vaudémonts to become apparent; Garron did not dream that his captive was also in love with the woman he had deigned to cast his eye upon.

The outward intercourse between the prisoners was of the most formal and indifferent kind. Indeed, it was more or less formal when they were all indulging in the privacy of the captain's cabin, which had been set apart for their use; for the marquis had relented of his half-intended design to permit matters to proceed to a climax, and he interposed his presence most effectively as a barrier to further love-making. It was too bad to have waited all these years, to have been thrown most unexpectedly in the society of the woman he loved, in the narrow confines of the ship, and then to have the course of his love-making interrupted by the cool dexterity of this dapper old man, who insisted upon bestowing his presence upon him.

Macartney was filled with disgust and indignation. But he had learned something during the last few years, and instead of blazing out as he would once have done, and thereby creating a hopeless breach between himself and the marquis, he dissembled his feelings as much as possible — from the old man, that is — while he took advantage of every opportunity to exhibit them to Louise.

As for that young woman, the situation was at once delightful and miserable. She revelled in happiness when she permitted herself to listen to Macartney, yet she was very miserable when she thought of the hope-

lessness of their passion. Her grandfather, it was evident, would never consent to a union between them. She clung fondly to the idea that she had dedicated herself to France, although her purpose became more and more feeble. Consequently her treatment of her lover was as variable as the weather. Sometimes she smiled upon him; sometimes she listened to him; sometimes she met his schemes to be alone with her with a frankness, a tenderness, and a dexterity as well, that lifted him to the seventh heaven. At other times she beamed upon him from afar in a way which elated while it baffled him. At intervals she was as cold as ice to him, nay, colder than her grandfather, who was always considerate and kind. She was as elusive, as variable, as changeable, as the pointing weather vane at the masthead.

Macartney had loved her in his absence with one of those rare passions which turned native fickleness into absolute fidelity; he had loved her while he could only dream of her; but when he was constantly in her presence, when she stood before him as the realization of his visions — well, the feelings he had felt for her before were not to be mentioned with the emotions he experienced now.

That the ineffable Garron should aspire to her for an instant was an insult. It was with difficulty that Macartney could keep his hands off that man. There was a profanation to the woman he loved in the very glance that he cast upon her, in the laugh with which he greeted her when she passed him on the quarter-deck—

the laugh of a master at the sight of a slave. Only Louise never cowered before Garron, and the ruffian was secretly afraid of her.

There were daily interviews between Garron and the vice-admiral in the cabin after the fleet had anchored at Aboukir. The vice-admiral never told the details of these conversations. He would come out of the cabin with as jaunty a step, as composed a mien, as he had when he had entered it. It was not until he was safe in his own cabin that he gave way to fits of terrible if impotent rage which left him shaken to the core.

Once his granddaughter had surprised him in the midst of a paroxysm of fury, and the sight had been appalling to her. She had instantly withdrawn from his presence — fortunately he had not observed her entrance. In her agitation she had told Macartney what she had seen. The two had been able to understand something of the baiting of Garron. Indeed, the man took a fiendish delight in torturing the old marquis. It was a question which he enjoyed the more, the agony of the marquis or the prospective possession of the comtesse.

The proud old noble would have died a thousand times rather than submit to such treatment for a moment; he would have starved himself to death, opened his veins with his teeth, had he been alone—but there was his granddaughter, there was his grandson, there was France. He had to live and suffer. Again and again he would have leaped upon Garron, and in the fury of his passion, great hulking brute though his

tormentor was, have torn him to pieces with his old and feeble hands. But he never saw Garron alone. Always with him was the silent Brébœuf.

Brébœuf stood high in the favor of his captain, for he never talked to any one. The captain even had a pallet spread for him at his cabin door, and he was the most trusted man of his crew. Pistol in hand he stood back of his new master with immobile countenance, marking the humiliation of the marquis.

Toward the latter part of July, Macartney being completely recovered, Garron sent for him to come to his cabin. Greatly surprised, the Irishman presented himself before his captor, who was attended as usual by his watchful guard.

"Citizen Mac —"

"Pardon," interrupted Macartney, coolly, "I am no citizen of France. Your customs do not interest me. You will therefore call me captain, or, to be more exact, commodore, which is my rank in the English navy."

"Very well, Monsieur le Chef d'Escadre," said Garron, smiling in a way that he meant to be ingratiating, "as you please. I am beginning to take less interest in the present customs of France, monsieur, than I formerly did. I speak to you in strictest confidence, of course?"

"I do not wish for your confidences, Monsieur Garron," said Macartney, quickly.

"No? Perhaps you will, however, when I tell you that they intimately concern the English?"

He looked meaningly at Macartney as he spoke.

Instantly there flashed into the Irishman's mind that Garron was not stanch in his devotion to the cause to which he had engaged himself. If through him he might secure his freedom and a chance to assist the de Vaudémonts ! If he could get to Nelson ! Where had that admiral gone, anyway? He seemed to have dropped out of the map as completely as the French had dropped in. Macartney came a step nearer Garron, and leaning his hand upon the table he bent closer to him.

"You were speaking about the English ? "

"Yes. About Admiral Nelson and his ships."

"What do you mean ? "

"Have I your word never to breathe what I am about to tell you to a living soul without my permission ? "

"You forget," said Macartney, pointing to Brébœuf, "that we are not alone."

"I forget nothing. This man is deaf, dumb, and blind in my service. You will give me your word, monsieur ? "

"I will. What is it you would say ? "

"Captain Macartney," said Garron, sinking his voice to a whisper, "many of us are not satisfied with affairs in France."

"You would bring back the King ? " whispered Macartney.

"As to that, later. This General Bonaparte has virtually made himself King of France. The Republic, sir, is in danger. Should he succeed in this expedition, he would be the Dictator of my beloved country. The

principles for which we patriots have fought, which we have established at so great an expenditure of blood and treasure, are in danger of being subverted, monsieur. The Rep—"

"Oh, damn the Republic!" said Macartney, impatiently. He was not much of a diplomatist, evidently. "What are you driving at?"

"Damn it if you will, monsieur," said Garron, quietly, shrugging his shoulders. "Indeed, I think 'tis damned already. Bonaparte will be its master. As between Bonaparte and—" He hesitated.

"And the King?"

"As a patriot, monsieur, loving his country, who would not see her dragged in the train of this Corsican adventurer, I—in short, monsieur, you have hit it exactly."

"What do you propose?"

"I propose to let you go free; to furnish you with means to find Admiral Nelson and the English ships; to take *Le Tonnant* out of the line of battle when they fall upon us; and surrender her to you; to use my influence to see that the fleet stays here in Aboukir in about the worst position possible for defence, and entirely unprepared as it is now."

"What do you want for this?"

"Monsieur, believe me, I serve my country for love alone."

"Yes, I know. I understand all that, but—"

"Since you insist upon it," returned Garron, "I should like, first of all, a free pardon for anything of

which I may be — ah — unjustly accused, a patent of nobility, and a pension of ten thousand francs a year."

"I have no power," said Macartney, "to pledge anything for the King of France."

"No, monsieur, doubtless not; but do you think the King of France would refuse any request that you might make of him if you brought about the downfall of this General Bonaparte and his own restoration?"

"Probably not," said the Irishman.

"That isn't all I can do," said Garron. "There is a plan on foot to abduct Bonaparte. A grandson of the man Vaudémont, one of your fellow-prisoners, is the head and front of the conspiracy. Those concerned in it are desperate men, and I have no doubt it will be brought about in the near future. I can prevent the success of that plot."

"How?" asked Macartney, curiously, who knew the facts very well but wanted to hear what Garron had to say for himself.

"By sending Bonaparte a certain paper." He carelessly lifted a document from the table before him as he spoke. "I found a certain incriminating account in the baggage of the man Vaudémont. If we enter upon this undertaking, I shall not send the paper."

"Will you also release the Marquis de Vaudémont and his granddaughter?"

"Not for all the Kings of France!"

"If harm should come to them, it would go hard with you after the restoration."

"No one could blame me, Monsieur Macartney, if the

marquis should die, let us say, of the Egyptian fever in spite of all my care and attention on this ship."

"But his granddaughter?"

"The natural grief of so devoted a maiden would account for her taking off in spite of all my efforts to console her."

"My God!" exclaimed Macartney, starting forward. Then he restrained himself. "Would you murder them?" he cried.

"They have an easy way to purchase life and liberty."

"What is that?"

"Let the woman become the wife of Jean Garron and the old man may go free. I should value a father-in-law such as he in the court of his Majesty, King Louis XVII."

"I won't do it!" cried Macartney.

"Think, monsieur," said Garron. "You go free! You serve your country and serve the King of France. You bring Admiral Nelson's fleet upon us instantly. You suffer no risk. I have an order here signed by Admiral Brueys for a boat to leave the fleet to go to Alexandria. The boat, which I shall bring from the shore, is manned by Arabs; her captain is paid by me and in my service. They will go where I — we — you, as my representative, direct. You can take that boat and put to sea. Why should you refuse?"

Nelson would give his soul almost for the news that Macartney could give him. As to the rest of Garron's offer to dispose of *Le Tonnant*, that was not a matter

of great importance. All Nelson wanted was knowledge. From what Macartney had seen of the French fleet he was convinced that Nelson could attend to it without the slightest difficulty. It certainly was his imperative duty to avail himself of Garron's proposition. He felt that certain sick feeling of loathing and repulsion when he looked at the captain and recalled what he said, that feeling that any honorable man experiences when brought in contact with a traitor, or a snake. Yet his own course was clear. He must go!

But how could he avail himself of the offer and leave Louise de Vaudémont to the mercy of the brute before him? It might be weeks before he could find Nelson and bring him upon the French fleet. A day would suffice to ruin forever the helpless young woman. In a moment Garron would take the life of the old man. These two depended upon him. They had no one else to look to. He could not desert them!

His duty drove him to accept Garron's proposition. His affections held him irrevocably to the ship. The two, as ever, were irreconcilable. He hesitated, but being a man he was not thereby lost. There was only one decision to which he could possibly come. Sooner or later he must go. With a man it is always the woman who must give way. With a woman it is different. Who shall say which is the better way?

As yet Garron had not the slightest suspicion as to why the man before him hesitated. The Frenchman did not dream of his prisoner's passion for Louise de Vaudémont. He wondered, therefore, why he did not

accept his offer at once. Macartney was utterly unable to announce the inevitable decision. The sweat beaded upon his forehead at the mental struggle through which he passed.

"Monsieur," he said at last, "I must have time. I must think over this matter. Give me a day!"

Like many another man in similar circumstances, he begged for delay. Each hour made the decision harder, yet he temporized. He would go, he must go! But not yet, not yet!

"Time is very precious, Monsieur le Capitaine," said the Frenchman, persuasively.

"A few hours, then? Until this evening? I could not get away in any event until nightfall."

"Very well, monsieur. You shall have until this evening," said Garron. "Why you hesitate I know not, but you English were ever incomprehensible. I have your word of honor that you will say nothing about this — nothing to any one?"

"You have," said Macartney, turning abruptly upon his heel and leaving the cabin.

He had given his word before, and there was nothing for him to do but repeat it now. Yet he would have given everything if he had not pledged himself to secrecy.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE REJECTION OF THE COMTESSE

MACARTNEY was literally in a desperate situation, and the most terrible part of it was that he could see absolutely no way, first of all to help the woman he loved, and second, to avoid accepting Garron's proposition. Nelson had trusted him to find the French fleet. He had found it and had been taken prisoner in the endeavor. The treachery of one of the French commanders opened a way for his escape. Nelson was groping around in the Mediterranean for that fleet. The chances were that if Macartney got away from Alexandria he could get word to the admiral in some way.

To get that word to Nelson was vital to the future of England. Unless that French fleet were destroyed, it was evident that Bonaparte would overrun the East. England would be struck in her most vulnerable point. Englishmen everywhere viewed with growing alarm the rising power of Bonaparte. A grapple to the death between England and the little Corsican had already been precipitated. Success was indispensable to England in that great struggle which began with the Nile, continued through Trafalgar, and ended at Waterloo. It was absolutely impossible and unthinkable that

Macartney should refrain from availing himself of this opportunity to serve his country. Every consideration of duty and honor demanded that he accept Garron's proposition immediately. He must meet the demand. His decision was as inevitable as death—and as terrible!

However, the delay of a few hours, or until nightfall, was not especially material, since he could not get away from the French fleet until darkness hid him. Something might happen in that time, he prayed. Yet he felt that nothing could happen. Go he must, and leave Louise he must. It was crushing.

A few years before Macartney might have hesitated as to his course, but the refining influence of a great passion had been upon him since he had met Louise de Vaudémont. He had been uplifted, ennobled, by his love for her. He saw things more clearly. Love blinds, but it also enlightens. He was a much finer man since he had dreamed dreams with the comtesse as the centre of his visions. His love would have been base, ignoble, like to that of Garron, unless it had had these uplifting qualities.

He knew and realized, instantly Garron's proposition was made to him, that he must accept it. Whatever be the prospective fate of any individual, however dear that individual might be, the claims of duty were paramount. She had been for France; he must be for England. Yet to leave her to Garron's passion! It killed him.

He knew that no constraint could ever enforce the noble soul tabernacled in Louise de Vaudémont's

beautiful person — that she would die rather than yield to Garron. Like Portia she could swallow coals of fire; like Arria drive a dagger into her heart; like Seneca open her veins, if need be, rather than submit to that monster into whose hands evil fortune had put the threads of her life.

Yet, even so, by leaving her he was literally condemning her to death. Her blood would be upon the hands of Garron, but would it not also be upon his own? How could he do it? O God! He never loved her as at that moment!

If he could only tell her! If he could only give her a hint, indicate in the faintest way the feelings that tore his being, the reasons that actuated him. But he was bound; he had given his word of honor — the honor of a sailor and of a gentleman. He could not even say to her that he was going — much less tell her why and where.

In honor bound? 'Tis true his word was given, his faith pledged, to one of the basest of mortals, — a man who from his own confession knew not the meaning of fidelity, a man who mocked at honor, a man who had entered into communication with him for the sole and only purpose of betraying his country, his commander, his comrades, his friends; a scoundrel, a common, low, vulgar, brutal ruffian, clothed with a little authority which he abused as men of his caliber always do under similar circumstances.

In honor bound? Why should Macartney respect a tie of which Garron thought nothing? Why, in dealing

with a traitor, should an upright man be bound by honor while the other party was moved by nothing but base self-interest? Could it be shown for a moment to Garron's satisfaction that his interest lay in betraying Macartney and the English, Macartney knew that there would be no hesitation as to the Frenchman's course.

Still he was bound to this man, fettered by the demands of honor, coerced by his integrity, pledged by his manhood. Garron trusted Macartney, and well he might.

And so the man who loved Louise de Vaudémont could say no word to her, not even of warning. The marquis was old. He maintained a bold front toward the man he hated, but even he did not realize how he was depending upon and trusting to Macartney. In the most desperate strait in which a man may find himself, threatened with the loss of everything, the old man had turned to the young man as to a saviour. Macartney knew he must go and leave them to their fate without a word, a sign. God! he could not do it! What was England? What was duty? What was honor, that such sacrifices should be exacted from him? A word, an ideal — abstractions! He would not go!

As he stood on the quarter-deck alone, staring out over the waste of sand on the desert shore tremulous in the heat of the late afternoon, there rose before him two visions. They ranged themselves on either side of him. One shaped itself into the beautiful features and noble figure of the woman he loved. That baseless fabric of a vision represented to him that which he

most desired; that for which pledges have been forfeited, duties neglected, honor destroyed; that for which lands have been laid desolate, kingdoms have been won and lost, since time and the world began — the love of woman! On the other hand there stood by him a pale, sallow, slender, appealing figure, with melancholy eyes looking at him from under a broad brow topped with a shock of dark hair — Nelson; and the pouting lips and pointing finger said, "Duty! — England expects every man to do his duty!"

He buried his face in his hands to shut out the wraiths, and the voice of the woman he loved broke upon his ear.

"You are sad, monsieur. You look across the sands and dream of home, perhaps?"

"Not of home," answered the man, hoarsely.

He turned and looked at her. She shrank back in surprise at what she saw. The turmoil in his soul had left its imprint upon his face. But at the sight of her there, in flesh and blood, close by him, another look leaped in his eyes, one more familiar, mingled with the despair, one she knew and loved. Ah, well the woman realized of whom he had been dreaming then. But what had caused him such unwonted agitation? He had been so cheerful, so lighthearted, so debonair, so hopeful! Now she saw him crushed, broken. He had just come from Garron, she had learned. What had happened?

"Monsieur," she said quickly, "you look — what is the matter? Does some danger threaten you?"

"None. Would to God it did!"

"Why then do you — is there some new peril for — my grandfather — or — myself?"

"Was not the old enough?"

"Monsieur," she said, laying her hand timidly upon his arm. Where he stood he screened her from observation, had there been any curious in the fore part of the ship. "Monsieur, you believe that — I — I — am your friend?" she faltered. "Tell me what has altered you?"

"Mademoiselle, will you answer me as you might answer a man facing death?"

"Death, monsieur!"

"Death to hope, death to the heart, mademoiselle, nothing more."

"Speak on."

"Will you put aside for the moment — what shall I say? — the reluctance you have manifested to listen to me?"

"I will listen."

"And will you answer?"

There was something so direct, so compelling, in his gaze, that in spite of herself Louise could not deny him. Not trusting herself to speak, she gently inclined her head.

"I love you. It's an old tale told many times in your ear. I ask you now, do you believe that?"

There was a sob in the girl's throat.

"I — yes, I believe," she murmured.

"Do you believe that I love you more than every-

thing that men hold dear — that you are the very light of heaven to me? To lose you, to part from you, tears the soul out of me! You have told me many times, and I have resented the telling, that you were for France. I understand what you meant now. You were not for me. There was a higher claim, a more powerful appeal. It broke my heart to hear you say that — Louise."

The quick twilight of the Orient was already upon them. In the dusk the girl's face gleamed before him. The half darkness gave her courage.

"Monsieur," she whispered, "you love me? Yes, I know it. Perhaps I was wrong before — maybe God intended — "

She stopped. He was looking at her with eyes that burned, his glance plunged into her very heart like a sword blade. Yet the wound they made was sweet to feel. She neither faltered nor turned away as she spoke further to him.

"I am — for you — if — if you will have me. May not one — love and be for France?"

It had come, then. The reward for which he had prayed and longed. The woman whom he loved, loved him! She had avowed it there in the twilight. He had but to wait for darkness to take her in his arms. This blessed end of all his dreams, this happy realization of all his hopes, was at hand! And he could not accept it! Love held the brimming cup of joy to his lips and ruthlessly dashed it down ere he could quaff the draught. Inexorable Fate had removed her as far

from him as the great star which shone in the clear gray of the evening sky above his head.

"Louise," he said to her, taking both her hands in his own, "the words you have said would have made me mad with joy — "

"What ! " cried the woman.

"But now — oh, God ! that I had died before this had come upon me ! "

"Monsieur, I have offered you myself, a demoiselle of France, the Comtesse de Vaudémont — You hesitate ? "

Macartney could not speak. He only bowed his head dumbly before her.

"Monsieur — "

"Wait ! Whatever you do, whatever you may think of me, however you may consider me, as you think on this interview in after life — and I am sure you will never forget it — believe only one thing, that I love you, that I would die for you — but — "

"You have refused me. The shame ! I shall remember only that ! "

She turned and left him, and stepping aft found herself face to face with Garron, who had just come out of the companionway. His eyes were filled with jealous hatred. He had heard enough, tiptoeing near like a thief in the night, to comprehend Macartney's interest in the de Vaudémonts.

"Come with me," he said softly. "Don't shrink, no harm is meant. I want to tell you something."

Dazed and bewildered, overwhelmed with the shock

she had sustained, scarcely realizing the situation, Louise found herself in the cabin in the presence of the captain. By his side was the silent Brébœuf. The marquis emerged from his berth as the two entered. Garron paid no attention to him.

"Woman," he said roughly, levelling his blunt finger at the girl, "you love that man!"

"How dare —"

"Nonsense!" cried the man, furiously. "I was there. I heard! That which I sought, you offered to him."

"Oh, God!" whispered the marquis softly under his breath, "for a weapon!"

"He refused —"

The woman stood before him with a body like ice, a heart aflame. If glances could have slain, she had killed him a thousand times. His words brought back to her the shame of her position — that he, the base-born, brutal Garron, should know! Her anger was equally divided between him and Macartney.

"Refused you, Louise! Captain Macartney? What does the man mean?" cried the marquis, coming forward swiftly.

"Silence, Vaudémont! One does not address you. Do you want to know why he would have none of you?" Garron asked, again turning to the woman. "Well, I'll tell you. We had a talk in the cabin this afternoon. He wants to escape. I found out that he loved you and that you love him. I offered to let him go to-night if he would resign you to me."

"It is a lie!" said the marquis, quickly. "A dastardly lie! I know men. I would pledge my life for the honor and fidelity of that man!"

"Your life isn't much of a hazard, Vaudémont, and besides you made a mistake before. You were willing to pledge your life once for the fidelity of Brébœuf. Now 'tis I who stake on him. I tell you arrangements have all been made to let this Englishman go. He gave you up to me."

"'Tis not true, I say! 'Tis not true!" said the marquis again.

He would have given his very soul, his hope of salvation, for a sword.

"My father," said the girl, turning to the old man as if he had indeed been her father, "he refused me — to-night."

"Impossible! Did you —"

"I did nothing, sir. He said that he loved me and I — I — admitted —"

"Then he would have none of her," interrupted Garron. "But have courage, mademoiselle, there's as good fish in the sea as were ever caught. Look at me! I love you, a blunt sailor, but with a true loyal heart. Take me!"

There was a tap upon the door of the cabin.

"Who's there?" cried Garron, angrily. "What do you want?"

"Captain Dupetit-Thouars' compliments, Captain Garron. A signal from the flagship desiring all the captains to repair on board at once," said a midshipman entering.

"Perdition!" growled Garron. "Just at this juncture when she was almost in my grasp! Have my gig called away and say that I shall come on deck immediately. You, Vaudémont, and you, woman, remain in the cabin! Brébœuf, guard them well! See that they hold no communication with the Englishman until I return. I shall be back at once. Au revoir!"

He swaggered out of the cabin and left the three alone. As he passed by Macartney, standing just where Louise had left him, with his head bent upon his arms upon the rail of the ship, Garron touched him upon the shoulder.

"I am called to the flagship, the next ahead. I shall return in half an hour. It is my desire that you remain here until I return. The Vaudémont woman charges me to say to you that she does not wish to have you approach her again."

Macartney nodded his head. There was nothing to say, nothing to do. His honor bound him to this man; his honor had conquered, but had left him broken-hearted. Louise had spurned him in anger and shame. What was the necessity for attempting an explanation, since none could be given? The parting was inevitable. Perhaps some day she would understand.

And still he stared across the rail and dreamed.

CHAPTER XXIV

BRÉBŒUF SPEAKS TO THE PURPOSE

BACK in the cabin a strange scene was taking place. As Garron left the marquis and his granddaughter with Brébœuf, Aurore crept out of the stateroom which she had shared with Louise and took her mistress in her arms. The woman had not shed a tear, had not given way openly to her shame and consternation, but her body shook with nervous shudders which the faithful foster-sister in vain endeavored to suppress. The marquis stared at Brébœuf for a moment.

"We cannot abide the presence of a traitor," he said, "let us retire to our staterooms until we are summoned again; and may God help you, my child, for indeed I cannot."

An extraordinary thing happened as he turned away. A deep voice broke the silence.

"Wait!" said Brébœuf.

The marquis stopped as if he had been stricken. He turned slowly and faced the Breton.

"Did you dare," he cried, "you false, betraying dog, to speak to me?"

Brébœuf fumbled at his belt, undid the clasp, dropped the heavy cutlass clattering upon the deck of the cabin. His two pistols he laid upon the table. From his head

he tore the hated cap that some one, in jest at his conversion to the Republic, had given him to wear and which he had worn ever since. He threw it at his feet, trampled upon it, and then stretched out his hands.

"Master!" he cried.

The marquis moved near to him.

"What is the meaning of this? Have you turned traitor again? Would you betray Garron as you betrayed me?"

The Breton shook his head.

"Grandfather!" cried Louise, quicker of apprehension, "I see it all! He has been playing the part for you, for me! He is our friend!"

The sailor fell at her feet, took her hand in his own and kissed it, and worshipped her as if he had been kneeling at a shrine.

"Right!" he said.

"Why didn't you give me a sign?" asked the marquis.

"Don't you see, sir, he didn't dare! He had to win Garron's confidence absolutely! The slightest thing would have awakened his suspicions! He played the part well. Oh, my good Brébœuf!" she cried, turning to the old man and taking his hand again.

"Thank God," cried the marquis, "that loyalty is not dead in France!"

"Yonder," said Brébœuf, pointing to the steps leading to the cabin occupied by the captain on the deck above them.

Wondering, but obeying his command, the marquis

and the women clambered up the ladder and entered Garron's cabin. There was a connection between the two, although it had not been used since they had been on the ship. Brébœuf opened the scuttle and led the way. The marquis' own sword, which had been taken from him when he was captured, was hanging in the captain's stateroom. Brébœuf fetched it and handed it to the old man. His pistols, which he carefully charged, the Breton also gave him.

"Saved!" exclaimed the marquis. "His life for mine! Louise, you will now be free. We shall get the papers! Honoré is saved! France —"

"There!" said Brébœuf, suddenly, pointing to a vacant stateroom opposite the captain's room.

There was the sound of oars rattling in oar-locks from the water alongside, the gentle impact of a boat glancing against the ship at the starboard gangway.

"Garron!" continued the Breton.

"Brébœuf," said the marquis, instantly comprehending, "you are a sailor, and by God, you are a gentleman! This is your command. I obey. I will wait till you call me. Come, Louise."

The three had little time to conceal themselves in the small cabin, the open door of which was screened with a curtain which permitted them to hear everything that was said in the great cabin. Brébœuf hastily resumed his cutlass and pistols. He took especial care to see that the latter were in absolutely perfect order. When Garron entered, in high good humor at having escaped so early, he was followed by Macartney.

A man about to escape an irksome confinement, a man who is about to be put in a position to render his country a great service, should be filled with joy. If ever death were written on a face, it was written on that of Macartney. As the light from the cabin lamp fell upon him Garron smiled in gratified pleasure. He realized of course the cause of Macartney's grief. The situation only made him the more determined to carry out his treacherous plan. By so doing he was getting rid of his most dangerous rival. Master Garron was playing a deep, dark game, with many ramifications of which those who were most closely interested in his actions as yet knew nothing.

"Be seated, monsieur," he said formally. "You have come to a decision, I suppose?"

"I must go," answered Macartney. "I can do nothing else."

"You will leave the ship and all it contains to-night, then?"

"I must, I can't help it!"

"You said nothing to the Vaudémont woman?"

"Look you, Garron," said Macartney, "I am in no mood for your sneers. A man can do his duty up to a certain limit, but there are times when the strain is too great. Call that young woman 'mademoiselle' if you wish anything further from me."

"Very well," answered Garron, awed by the other's furious anger. "What's in a word, anyway?"

"Much!"

"You will go to-night?"

"The quicker the better."

"And the reward?"

"Arrange it as you will."

"I have drawn it up in writing. Shall I read it?"

"I will read it myself."

Garron handed him the paper, and Macartney hastily made himself master of the contents.

"Under consideration of the sacrifices made by Jean Garron, Capitaine de Vaisseau in the navy of France, in behalf of his rightful King, Louis XVII, in which Garron gives freedom to me and engages to surrender *Le Tonnant* to the English and to use all his influence to keep the French fleet where it is and in its present state of unpreparedness, and to do everything to make a victory easy for the English; and in view of the fact that Garron promises not to supply General Bonaparte with information in his possession concerning a conspiracy by Captain Honoré de Vaudémont to abduct the general, Captain Robert Macartney, Chef d'Éscadre of the English Navy, agrees to use his influence, first, to secure for the said Garron a pension of ten thousand francs; and second, to see that said Garron is ennobled by his rightful king when he shall have been reëstablished on his throne."

"Have you finished, monsieur?" asked Garron, presently.

"Yes."

"Those were substantially the terms agreed upon, were they not?"

"They were! Give me a pen!"

He signed the document boldly.

"Now," he said, "I presume, as there is nothing more to be done, I may go?"

"You may. You will find a cutter alongside manned by Arabs with a renegade German turned Mohammedan as their captain. He is in my pay and under my orders. Here is a pass to permit the boat to run the guard-lines. They keep negligent watch out yonder, but should any one of the sloops or frigates overhaul you, this pass, signed by Admiral Brueys, will enable the vessel to go free. You would better not be seen, though."

"I shall take care of that. May I have arms?"

"Not in this cabin. There are some in the cutter, which are at your service. Here also is a rough chart of the Bay of Aboukir, which may help you. Good-by."

He stretched out his hand to the other after giving him the chart mentioned.

"I don't have to take your hand. 'Tis not in the bargain," answered Macartney, rudely turning away in evident contempt.

"Curse you!" said Garron under his breath, fixing his malevolent gaze upon the Irishman moving toward the door. Before he reached it, however, he stopped.

"One more thing," he said, "I want to see the Comtesse de Vaudémont before I go."

"She will not see you. You can't see her."

"I must!" said Macartney, coming toward Garron.

"What have you to say to her?"

"Never mind what. I want to see her."

"You can't, I say! I won't —"

"By heaven, sir!" cried the Irishman. "I tell you —"

"Your word of honor, monsieur!"

"You try me too much!"

He was very near the Frenchman now, his face full of passion, and Garron, though a man of courage, shrank away from him.

"Brébœuf!" he cried.

Brébœuf was ready. His pistol was out. Garron glanced back to see if he had heard his summons and found himself looking into the barrel. The hand of the Breton did not tremble or quiver. Macartney stopped in astonishment, while Garron fairly gasped with surprise.

"Down!" said Brébœuf, literally forcing his captain into his seat by the pressure of his heavy left hand.

"Are you mad?" shouted Garron. "What do you mean? Put down your pistol! I'll have you hanged!"

"Master!" called the Breton.

Sword in hand the old man appeared in the door.

CHAPTER XXV

THE MARQUIS GIVES ADVICE

"Ah, Monsieur Garron!" said the marquis, bowing suavely with all the magnificent courtesy of which he was a master, "how fortunate a meeting!"

"The women, too!" exclaimed Garron, as Louise and Aurore followed the old man out of the cabin.

Macartney awoke to life at the sight of the woman he loved. He stepped toward her instantly. His movement was not so quick as hers. She deliberately turned her back upon him, stepped past him, and walked to the other side of her grandfather.

"Betrayed!" gasped out the French captain.

"You are accustomed to deal in treachery, my good Garron. I marvel that you are surprised at having a measure meted out to you. Here we be four men, and two are gentlemen, Brébœuf and myself, and two are — traitors!"

He looked at Macartney as he spoke.

"If you mean that for me," cried Macartney, fiercely, "I —"

"You resent it, Monsieur le Chevalier? I am an old man, sir. When I have attended to this reptile I shall be at the service of his brother in duplicity."

"My God!" cried the Irishman. "Not even from

her grandfather would I permit — hear me, monsieur, here is some strange mistake! You misjudge me!"

"Did you not refuse the woman?" broke in Garron.

He was frightened to death, yet he could not resist the temptation, and, perhaps, he argued, keenly enough, he might so embroil the marquis and Macartney as to effect his own escape, or at least distract attention from himself.

"You hound!" said Macartney, his voice low and tense, his face white, his eyes ablaze, "you know —"

"Your word of honor!" cried Garron.

"What is my word of honor compared —"

"What indeed?" broke in the marquis, dryly. "Monsieur Macartney, you declined the advances — which God forgive her — your well-simulated passion had extorted from the Comtesse de Vaudémont."

"I —"

"Did he not, Louise?" said the old man, turning to the girl.

The comtesse stared at Macartney for a moment, her blood in her face. She nodded, turned away, and buried her head on Aurore's broad shoulders.

"You see, monsieur? You were once a man of honor, I think, and though you have associated yourself with these *canailles* on the ship here, you cannot have forgotten what is customary among gentlemen."

"Monsieur," cried Macartney, "I swear to you, rather than bring a blush of shame to the cheek of that lady, your granddaughter, I would kill myself with my own hand!"

"If you wish to spare me that painful duty," said the marquis, coolly, "I have no doubt that opportunity will be provided. Indeed, if you give me your word of honor that you will use it upon no one but yourself, I will provide you with a weapon."

He offered Macartney one of his own pistols. The man took it, raised it with what half-formed purpose in his mind he scarce divined. As he seized it the girl brushed hastily past her grandfather and clasped him by the arm.

"No, no!" she cried.

"You see, monsieur," said the marquis, fiercely. "Why do you hesitate?"

Macartney looked in Louise's eyes and lowered his hand. As he stared at her she shrank away from him.

"I do more than hesitate," he said. "I refuse because I have a duty to perform."

"Duty!" sneered the old noble, "a clever subterfuge — an easy recourse. I have no doubt this dog here prated of duty when he offered to betray his ship and let you go free. And when, as the price of your freedom, you abandoned your suit for the Comtesse de Vaudémont, you, too, made use of the same word. I had thought — stop, monsieur!" continued the old noble, fiercely, seeing Macartney endeavoring to interrupt him, "I had thought of attending to Garron first, but you have a prior claim. Is there another sword, Brébœuf? We can settle our affair now."

"I will not fight with you!" said Macartney, throwing the pistol upon the table.

"Afraid, monsieur?"

"Afraid, my lord! It ill becomes me to speak of it, but have I not given you proof upon proof of my courage, as I thought I had given this lady proof upon proof of my love? It's all a hideous mistake!"

"Were you not to leave the ship to-night?" asked the marquis.

"Yes."

"Were you not to leave us here?"

"Yes, but—"

"I will hear no more!"

When Macartney had thrown the pistol upon the table he had unwittingly placed it within the reach of Garron. The two men had become so excited in their conversation that their attention had been withdrawn from him. Garron thought he saw a chance for freedom. Suddenly he sprang to his feet and reached for the pistol. He reckoned without Brébœuf, however. The old man apparently had been watching the marquis and Macartney with profound attention. But before Garron had got fairly to his feet the iron hand of the Breton grasped him and forced him down in his chair again. Garron cowered under the ferocious glare of the old sailor, who thrust the barrel of his pistol full into his face.

"Monsieur Macartney," he cried piteously, "you are my ally! Deliver me from these people!"

"You coward!" hissed Macartney. "You have ruined me! You have lied to the comtesse about

me! You devil! Have I sold my soul for nothing? I will tell of —"

"Your word of honor!" Garron burst out in frantic appeal.

"Wait," said Brébœuf, who had gradually untangled the confusing thread. "Liar!" he added, striking Garron heavily with his left hand. "Man!" he continued, pointing toward Macartney as he had done once before.

"What is it? What do you mean?" cried Louise.

"No bargain," continued Brébœuf, amazed at his own volubility.

"How do you know that?"

"I heard."

"Is it true?" cried the girl, looking at him.

"Your promise, Captain! Your word!" cried Garron again.

"Chevalier Macartney," said the vice-admiral, "give me leave. I am an old man bred in the most honorable of services. I have lived much at court and camp. Believe me, sir, my advice should have weight. I consider that you are absolved from any engagement you have entered into with this man. If you can explain the equivocal situation in which you find yourself, I think you should do so."

Macartney hesitated. How far the marquis might acquiesce in Garron's treachery; how far the marquis' hatred of that Republic might carry him; whether the marquis might find it proper to reveal to Bonaparte Macartney's share of the proposed undertaking in the

hope of securing his own freedom and that of his party, Macartney could not tell. The very hesitancy in his mind, however, convinced him that the marquis was wrong, and that nothing could relieve him, not only of his pledge, but of the obligations of the situation.

"I cannot, monsieur; but this I can say, that this man never knew I loved the Comtesse de Vaudémont until hours after he made his proposition to me; and I assure you upon my word, sir, as an officer, as a Chevalier of the noble Order of St. Louis, that no suspicion of bargaining involving your granddaughter entered between us. That I had proposed to accept my freedom in obedience to what I believed the paramount call of duty, is true, sir. I could do no less. There are times, my lord, when even the voice of the heart must be silenced by the appeal of duty. I would give everything that I possess, or hope for, to be the husband of the comtesse yonder. To be constrained to say nothing when kind Providence had put me in possession of my desire, was death itself. Not by any bond into which I may have entered with this wretched traitor, but by duty, and duty alone, sir, was I — am I — silent. You have been a sailor, my lord, you can understand. As for mademoiselle — I cannot hope."

"It's a lie! It's a lie!" shouted Garron.

"Truth," growled the Breton under his breath.

Louise was by Macartney's side in an instant. Seizing his hand in both her own, and before he could prevent it, she raised it to her lips.

"Forgive me, forgive me!" she cried.

"Monsieur le Chevalier," said the marquis, gravely, "I did you wrong. My sword and I are at your service. Should you choose —"

"Monsieur," said Louise, gently, "he is an old man, my grandfather —"

"My lord," said Macartney, "say no more. May my arm perish and my sword rust before I engage with you! Your granddaughter has made amends, and now —"

Before he could say another word Brébœuf, moving with astonishing quickness, left Garron, sprang to the other side of the table, lifted a paper from it, and before the French captain could recover his breath, the Breton had resumed his old position. With a word he handed a paper to the marquis.

"Proof!" he said.

Stepping nearer the light, the old man read the agreement.

"Ah," he exclaimed, "this explains it! I understand fully now. You are a traitor even to your own Republic, Garron!"

"Captain Macartney," said Garron, "you cannot go free unless I have that paper."

"What happens to that paper is immaterial to me," said Macartney, "and you forget that I have your pass."

"What good will that do you?"

"I have but to leave the cabin, board the cutter, and get away!"

"The officer of the deck will not allow you to leave

the ship. Your pass is for outside the lines. Without a word from me — "

"That word you shall speak."

"Shall I?"

"Monsieur le Marquis, give me leave to command your servant a moment?"

The vice-admiral nodded.

"Brébœuf," continued Macartney, "stand a little back of the captain. There! Lower your pistol until it points straight at his heart, through his back, so that no one entering the cabin can see. Is it cocked and primed?"

The Breton nodded.

"Very well. Now, Monsieur Garron, you will ring that bell on your table. When the orderly enters the cabin you will say to him, 'Bid the officer of the watch allow Monsieur Macartney and the Marquis de Vaudémont and his party enter the cutter alongside, which is to be under his orders.' Just that and nothing more. If he makes sign or gesture or doesn't deliver the message exactly, pull the trigger, Brébœuf."

"An admirable plan," said the marquis. "Then you intend that we go with you?"

"I propose it, monsieur. 'Twill be a hazardous voyage, but we shall be free."

"Enough," said the marquis, "we will go. But first — "

"Curse you! I — " cried Garron.

"Silence!" said the Breton, digging the pistol into the man's back.

Brébœuf had little to say, but what he had to say was exceedingly to the point always.

"First," continued the marquis, "I must secure possession of my papers."

He stepped over to the table and began to rummage among the documents spread upon it.

"Too late!" laughed Garron, an idea flashing into his mind. "I sent them to Bonaparte this afternoon."

"Ah!" said the vice-admiral, quickly, "Where is the general?"

"He was to arrive at Alexandria from Cairo this evening. You may go, Macartney, since this treacherous dog has the advantage of me. But not you, Vaudémont, or if you do, your grandson will be facing a file of men on the sands to-morrow. Bonaparte will have him shot. Perhaps—"

"Hardly," said the marquis, coolly.

"Why not, Vaudémont?"

The marquis was punctiliously courteous, in small even as in great matters, and he demanded the same courtesy from others when he had the power to enforce it. In this instance it happened that he had. He leaned over the table and looked Garron closely in the eye.

"Say Monsieur le Marquis de Vaudémont," he whispered gently, and Garron did so. "You wish to know why my grandson will not be shot? I will buy his life."

"With what?"

"With this."

He lifted Macartney's contract. Garron stared at him, his face bloodless with terror. It had not occurred to him what a mighty weapon of destruction this paper was in the hands of an enemy.

"Mercy!" he gasped, but as he looked into the inflexible iron face of the marquis he knew that his plea was in vain.

"Such mercy as I would show to a mad dog, Garron."

"But," said Macartney, reluctantly, "I must interfere. I cannot —"

"Monsieur Macartney," interrupted the vice-admiral, at the same time covering him with his pistol, "it is your duty, of course, to endeavor to possess yourself of this paper lest your plan miscarry. It is my duty not to allow you to have it. I am quite the equal of Brébœuf on the trigger."

Macartney smiled.

"Having done my duty, monsieur, I conceive that honor is satisfied. I am unarmed. What conditions do you make?"

"One," said the vice-admiral, also smiling. "You have been overcome by *force majeure*. I require your word of honor that you will not attempt to take this paper from me."

"And if I give it?"

"You may go where you will," said the old man.

"You have it," said Macartney.

"*Bien!*" said the vice-admiral, lowering his pistol. "Now we would better get away without delay. I shall take this document to General Bonaparte at

Alexandria and tell him the truth. By it I shall secure, I trust, my grandson's life and the protection of my granddaughter from this miscreant. Bonaparte is a Republican, but they say he has a magnanimous heart, a respect for old age, and a sympathy with misfortune. The boat is yours, Captain Macartney. You must take us to Alexandria, and then — go where you please."

"What shall we do with Garron?" asked Macartney.

"Oh, gag and bind him, and leave him, I suppose."

"I remain," said Brébœuf.

The marquis looked thoughtfully at the man.

"Yes, that would be best," he said. "You can keep him quiet through the night. Don't kill him. I shall be back before morning with orders, but, if there should be some delay, what then?"

"Death!" said the Breton, smiling, as if it were a matter of indifference to him.

"It must be so," said the vice-admiral, slowly and reluctantly. "If we should leave him here alone, some one might come in. He would give the alarm. We would be overtaken. I am loath to leave you, Brébœuf, but there seems no other way. But — "

"The man must stay," said Macartney. "The captain must give orders that he is not to be interfered with until morning and the sailor must keep watch over him. General Bonaparte has a reputation for promptness and celerity. In such a case he will act immediately. The order for Garron's arrest will be here before dawn."

"I shall bring it myself," said the marquis, "if I can obtain it."

"Gentlemen," gasped the unhappy captain of *Le Tonnant*, "for God's sake — he will have me shot — I'll let you go — I will do anything — "

"Can you recall that paper that you sent to General Bonaparte?"

"I lied, I lied! It wasn't sent!" cried the man.

"Yes, you said you would hold it when you asked me to sign that paper," said Macartney.

"Produce it, then," said the marquis.

"I destroyed it — I lost it — I — I — "

"No more lies!" said the old man, curtly. "Now, Captain Macartney, your lesson to him."

"Garron," said Macartney, "you are to call the officer of the watch by your orderly who will answer when I tap yonder bell. You are to say to the officer of the watch, 'Allow Captain Macartney, and the Marquis de Vaudémont and his party, to leave the ship in the cutter alongside. Here is a permit from Admiral Brueys to pass the cutter outside the lines — on business for the Republic. Please give orders that I be not disturbed during the night.' Say it over after me!"

"'Allow Captain Macartney, the Marquis de Vaudémont and his party — ' Mercy!"

"Go on!" said Macartney.

"'To leave the ship in the cutter alongside. Here is a permit from Admiral Brueys' — for God's sake, monsieur — "

"Finish!" remarked Macartney, coolly.

"'To pass the cutter outside the lines — on business for the Republic' — I can't do it, I dare not!"

"You must! Say the rest!"

"'Please give orders that I be not disturbed during the night.'"

Over and over again they made the miserable man repeat the message until he had it letter perfect.

"Now," said Macartney, "if you indicate by voice, or look, or gesture, if you falter, or hesitate, or betray us by any sign whatsoever, Brébœuf shall kill you here like the dog that you are!"

"And I have a weapon in case Brébœuf should fail," said the marquis, pleasantly, sitting down close to the captain in the most friendly way, his own pistol covering him and concealed by the table. "Remember, a single sign and you are a dead man!"

"My men will kill you if you fire," said Garron.

"You won't be there to see that. Besides, better death from their hands than life from yours," said the vice-admiral. "And you forget we shall have this paper to show them—" he paused significantly. "Ready, Captain Macartney?" he said, turning to Macartney.

The young man reached out his hand and struck the bell. Before the officer of the watch, who was summoned by an orderly who had entered the cabin in obedience to the signal, came in, Macartney lowered the light and placed himself in such a position that the officer would have to step over him to get to the centre of the room. It was as well he did so, for Garron was as pale as death. Great beads of sweat stood on his forehead. At a signal from Macartney Louise placed herself next the lamp so that Garron's

face was in shadow, otherwise the officer of the watch could not have failed to notice this agitation.

Garron delivered his message quickly so soon as Lieutenant Bauduy put his head in the door. He did not dare do otherwise. The agony of the man was frightful, and he had that instinctive desire to get it over with which sometimes moves a criminal to hurry his executioners.

"Very good, sir," said the lieutenant, saluting and withdrawing.

"Now, Admiral," said Macartney, "are you ready?"

"In a moment," answered the old man. "Aurore, step below and fetch cloaks for your mistress and myself. My good Garron," continued the marquis, as the woman brought the garments, "I trust you will have a pleasant evening with the faithful Brébœuf. I was right, you see, when I staked my life on his honesty and fidelity, worthless as you reminded me that stake was. I will give you a subject for consideration in the silent watches of the night. That is, that it is well to be faithful to something, even though it be only that visionary affair men call a Republic. I shall see you in the morning, doubtless. Therefore, I say *au revoir*. Come, mademoiselle. Come, Macartney."

"Curse you!" cried Garron, raising his voice. "May —"

"Silence!" said Brébœuf, ruthlessly, as Macartney, the last of the party to leave, closed the door.

CHAPTER XXVI

WHERE CLEOPATRA SAILED

It was perhaps half after nine o'clock at night when the escaping prisoners descended to the deck of the cutter lying alongside. The captain of the cutter was a master of that polyglot dialect prevalent among seafarers in the Mediterranean, which is known as Lingua-Franca, in which Macartney was also proficient, and they had no trouble in telling him what to do. Captain Schneider had received instructions from Garron that he was to obey Macartney implicitly. He made no hesitation, therefore, about casting off and beating up the bay toward the open sea. The wind was blowing fresh and strong from the eastward, and so soon as they rounded the point of Isle Béquières, which formed the northwestern extremity of the Bay, they would have an easy run for the city distant some ten miles away.

There was a little cabin in the cutter, and the vice-admiral, a man of nearly seventy years of age and not naturally robust, concluded that he would lie down upon one of the transoms in the hope of snatching an hour or two of sleep in order better to sustain the fatigues that he foresaw would be entailed upon him by their further adventures. He was already much

exhausted by the scene in the cabin. Before he did so he took occasion once more to apologize to Macartney.

Again that officer had extricated them from their fearful peril, although he could have done nothing, of course, without the invaluable assistance of Brébœuf. The vice-admiral was able thoroughly to enter into the situation of the Irishman. He was able fully to understand and comprehend what the man must have gone through.

That he had so nobly sacrificed himself at the call of duty only served to raise him in the estimation of this remarkable old man. Here was one who could fully be trusted with the honor of the de Vaudémonts. Here was one to whom with confidence could be committed the care of his granddaughter. No degradation could come to the blood of the de Vaudémonts in its admixture with that of Macartney. The Irishman had fairly won the right to consideration. The old man could make no more objection.

"Monsieur Macartney," he said, after he had announced his intention of retiring to the cabin, "again I beg you to forgive me. I have been young who now am old. I have loved and have gained even as I have lost. I, too, am a sailor. I know what it must have cost you. Duty — 'tis hard even for the old, in the face of a woman, and for the young" — he lifted his hands with a characteristic gesture — "I make what amends I can, monsieur. 'Tis a heavenly night. I could have revelled in it fifty years ago. I leave it to you and Louise."

Discreetly enough Aurore stepped forward to the extreme edge of the cockpit, nestled down into a corner, and, like the marquis on the transoms in the cabin, composed herself to slumber. The little enclosure aft was empty of all save grizzled old Herr Schneider and the two lovers. The Arabs of the crew were clustered around the mast forward. The captain was busy sailing the boat and had no eyes for anything or anybody, discreet and worthy German that he was.

Louise and Macartney were practically alone. A little silence fell between them, the stillness of a sweet, warm tropic night upon the water, broken by the soft splash of the waves dashed into spray by the bows and rippling caressingly along the sides. As the boat heaved in the gentle swells the boom swung with a slight creaking that added a not discordant note to the soft whisper of the breeze through the rigging. It was such a night as lovers dream upon and long to live in.

And they were happy. They had escaped as by a miracle from the direst of perils. With that full consciousness which does not come from intuition alone but from a frank admission as well, they realized at last that each the other loved. And there was a very heaven of content in the assurance. There were a thousand things that might be said, a thousand words that trembled upon their lips, a thousand thoughts that surged within their breasts. But they sat close together, silent, still.

Singularly enough, it was the woman who moved first. She reached out her hand, that strong, firm, white, beautiful hand, the hand of a woman fit indeed

to be the bride of a sailor, and took the man's hand in a warm and tender clasp.

"Will you forgive me, monsieur?" she murmured. "I asked you in the cabin of the ship yonder, but you did not say."

"Forgive you! Oh, Louise!" answered Macartney, his soul in his glance. "If you could know the anguish I passed through in that moment when you said you loved me and there was nothing I could do but turn away! Yet only the joy of the present enables me to measure the agony of that moment."

"But you have not forgiven me? I want to hear that! To have that assurance!"

Macartney cast a swift glance aft. Herr Schneider was standing holding the tiller and staring persistently up to windward trying to see if he could weather the point without going about. Aurore was asleep. The Arabs forward were concealed by the sail which threw its shadow over them.

"Forgive you!" he whispered.

He slipped his arm along the rail until it fell round her shoulders, and then he drew her to him. She was startled beyond measure. Yet she knew what she would do. The thought gave her a pang almost of terror. No man, no lover, had ever— She would have freed herself and moved away, but something constrained her. Her bosom heaved, her pulse throbbed, her voice quivered.

"Mercy!" she faltered, as she had pleaded with him once before, long ago.

But he had none for her now. Her heart rose in her throat and he found it upon her lips as he pressed them to his own. She trembled in his embrace as a frightened bird. Her head fell back upon his shoulder. There was light enough, or was it the embodiment of his own imagination that enabled him to see in her face, as it enabled her to see in his, the illumination of a deathless passion?

She had hesitated, she had resisted, she had cried for mercy — now she was conquered. She gave herself up to him in complete surrender. He could not kiss her too passionately or too often. The years of service, of worship, of adoration, were lost in the joy of the flying seconds. She was his at last. He could feel her heart beating against his own, her lips spoke to him without a word, without a sound, in kisses as long and still as death, and as sweet, ay, sweeter, than life itself.

"Don't," she said at last. "It is too much. I cannot bear so much — happiness."

"And you are mine, mine, after all these years! Not England, not France, not anything, can take you from me now!"

"Yours, yours always! I have been a proud woman, Monsieur — Robert —" How her voice lingered over his name! "But now I give myself to you and joy in the giving. You will take me away. I shall be a stranger in a strange land. I shall never see France again. But I shall be yours, yours only, yours all — that will suffice!"

"My darling," whispered the man, tenderly, "life

shall be as you wish it. Where you go, I will follow; where you live, I will live; where you die, I will die; where you are buried, there will I be buried also. Having you, I can give up everything else."

"Yes, everything but honor and duty."

"But had I not clung to those, dear, I would be unworthy of your love."

"That is the difference between man and woman," she sighed, enlightened at last by the knowledge which comes but once in a lifetime and lasts forever. "When a woman loves she loves with all. You might be dishonored and shamed; I would grieve for that, but I would still love you. You might be false to your duty and disgraced; it would break my heart, but I would be true, I would love you."

"Yet what would you think of me if I—"

"I would have you do what is right, but if you felt as—I only want to show you that a man's love is different from a woman's."

"Louise," answered Macartney, "I know that. Nothing that I could say or do or be could make me worthy of you. I was not an admirable character, a careless, happy-go-lucky sailor, that day when I stumbled in upon you in the old ruined tower in Provence, but now I am different. From that day I have been more faithful, more constant, than the compass needle to its star. Wherever I have gone, whatever I have done, my heart has swung toward you. I have not had a thought that you could not share. There has not been an action that you could not know. I

have tried, since I saw you, to be worthy of you, and all my life will be one long regret that I did not see you before, that from the time I was enabled to shape my own conduct I have not had you before me to inspire me, to help me, to lift me upward."

"I would not have you different," said the woman, softly. "What I have loved has been here." She laid her hand upon his breast. How his heart quivered under the light touch of her fingers. "I could not want anything changed, for what is here fills my own heart full. You are there and it could contain nothing more."

She smiled at him as she spoke. Low upon the horizon the red-gold edge of the rising moon shot a ray across the waters. The light fell upon her face. His eyes devoured her, and reckless of who might see, "the world forgetting, by the world forgot," he kissed her again and again, and full and fair and sweet she returned his every caress.

"Monsieur," after a time — neither of the lovers knew whether it were long or short — exclaimed the gruff voice of Herr Schneider, who was most persistently staring away from the lovers, "yonder are the lights of Alexandria. What next?"

"Aurore!" called Macartney, quickly; and, as the maid sleepily stumbled toward him, "Summon your master."

As the marquis came out of the little trunk cabin the Irishman spoke boldly to him. There was little time in any event.

"Monsieur de Vaudémont, the comtesse has done me the honor to allow me to repair the frightful mischance of the evening," he said.

"But how, Captain Macartney?"

"She has deigned to accept my love, my lord. Have I your consent to make her my wife?"

"Not to-night, surely?" exclaimed the old man.

"No, not to-night. I have a duty to perform."

"When, then?"

"When I have performed it." He paused. "At the earliest convenient season, Monsieur le Marquis."

"Be it so," said the marquis, gravely. "You are a man of honor, a gentleman. You have served me and shall serve the King of France. I am an old man, and the times indeed are out of joint. You will love her, you will watch over her, you will care for her?"

"As my own soul!" answered Macartney.

"God bless you!" said the marquis, reaching out his hand.

"May He so deal with me as I deal with her, monsieur," returned the younger man, solemnly.

Louise stood up and slipped her arms around the old man's neck.

"I love him," she whispered, "I love him."

"I know, my child," smiled the marquis, patting her gently on the shoulder. "Come, no tears now. We have work to do."

"The lights of Alexandria, monsieur," interrupted Macartney, pointing.

"You, too, have work to do," continued the old man. "What are your plans?"

"To land you on the wharf yonder."

"And then?"

"You are going to leave me?" said Louise, "just when —"

"My child, the man must go and you must bid him godspeed. 'Tis for our King he strikes. But —" The marquis hesitated. "Yet our chances might be greater with Bonaparte, I imagine, if we brought him this English prisoner."

As he spoke the old admiral ostentatiously drew his sword, laid it down upon the transom, and placed his pistols by its side. "I shall be compelled to take you with us, Captain Macartney, unless —"

Macartney was quick to take the hint. He seized sword and pistol and pointed the weapon at the marquis.

"My lord," he said, smiling, as he spoke, "turn about is fair play. I am master now. I will land you at the wharf. If you attempt to resist, I shall be under the painful necessity of pulling the trigger."

"I yield," said the marquis, bowing gravely; "'tis to *force majeure*. You have my word, monsieur."

"I return your weapons, therefore. Captain Schneider, where can General Bonaparte be found?"

"At the Governor's Palace, doubtless, monsieur," replied the German. "The wharf ahead opens on the street that leads to where it is."

"Take us there. Pardon me, Monsieur le Marquis, but have you any money?"

"A little. Enough to secure an escort to the Palace and to pass myself through the guards, I fancy."

The little boat instantly shot up into the wind, the sail flapped, the sheet was hauled over, and the cutter drifted gently down to the pier head. The nimble Arabs sprang out and secured it, temporarily taking a turn with a rope round one of the posts. A French sentry on the wharf challenged them. It was Macartney who replied: —

"A boat from the French fleet at Aboukir with messages for General Bonaparte. Here is our pass."

The sentry called the sergeant of the guard, and the two spelled out the wording of the document.

"You may land your messengers, citizen," he said, drawing back and saluting.

The hour for parting had come. Aurore already stood on the wharf. The marquis started forward to hand his granddaughter over the side. Macartney was there before him. He bent low as if to kiss her hand. The marquis tapped him on the shoulder.

"For this time," he said, smiling, "you may go higher."

Louise bent her head, but Macartney availed himself to the full of the marquis' permission. He lifted it with his hand and upon her lips he kissed her full. He stood watching the three disappear in the darkness, listening to their footfalls upon the wharf until that sound, too, died away in the distance.

"Now," he said to himself, as he stepped back upon the deck of the cutter and signed to the men to cast off, "for Nelson!"

Book V

BONAPARTE

CHAPTER XXVII

AS ONE GENTLEMAN TO ANOTHER

By the judicious expenditure of his last gold piece, the marquis succeeded in passing the guards around the Palace and in entering the garden, which, lighted by thousands of lamps among the broad-leaved palms and other tropical foliage, presented an enchanting picture. It was crowded with officers, and ladies whose chief attraction was in their apparel — or lack of it! — who had attached themselves to the fortunes of the army. The Comtesse Louise, attended by Aurore, held herself very straight indeed, looking neither to the right nor to the left, as she passed beside groups of those painted beauties of Paris and elsewhere. Music from military bands stationed here and there quivered softly in the warm air of the July evening. And above all rose the hum of busy conversation enlivened with merry laughter.

Learning, in answer to his inquiry, that General Bonaparte had arrived and was within the Palace, the vice-admiral threaded his way, not without becoming the subject of mocking jests, through the shameless and irreverent who crowded the garden until he reached the great stairway. Passing himself off as one of the guests of the fête, he ascended the stairs and presented

himself at the door of that hall of audience where the mameluke beys had from ancient days administered justice, but which was now given over to revelry and pleasure, and demanded an entrance. There was something so commanding in the quaint personality of the old man, something so authoritative in his bearing, that the soldier on guard, after a momentary hesitation, flung open the great doors.

The scene revealed, from one point of view, was even more magnificent than that of the garden. Whatever the ladies who had followed the army had left behind them, or lost *en route*, they still retained the dash and brilliancy which had enabled them to occupy the positions they had assumed. The gorgeous uniforms of the officers, men of higher rank as a rule than those in the garden, almost outshone the beautiful gowns of the women. The band of the *Garde Républicain*, hidden in an alcove, concealed by palms, was playing a spirited air as they entered.

On a temporary stage on one side of the room the ladies of the corps de ballet, which Bonaparte had thoughtfully caused to be included among the warlike munitions with which the expedition had been provided, were performing to the delectation of those who chose to regard them. The room was draped with the flag of Egypt and the brilliant tricolor of France. At intervals tall grenadiers stood on guard, for in so motley a throng no one could tell what unauthorized person or persons might be introduced with what nefarious design in his or her heart.

Some of the Egyptians of the higher class, including a few renegade mamelukes and Turks, lent a touch of unusual picturesqueness to the scene. In their strange attire they mingled with the dancers, staring at the passing show; or, with eyes that searched greedily, they marked the unveiled, the shameless, loveliness of the foreign women with whom they were surrounded. And there were civilians, clerks, savants, authors, poets, painters, chroniclers, who had been attached to the expedition. These exhibited in their dress the strange and fantastic garments of the Incroyables of the Revolution.

The shifting scene was like a brilliant panorama of life and color. It was Paris, with all its wickedness, with all its beauty, with all its gayety, transported as if by some necromancer's wand to the sensuous, soul-witching Orient.

At the other end of the hall the necromancer himself stood, half hidden by a group of men and officers, and women, too, who surrounded him as moths are attracted to the candle's blaze. As the marquis, with his granddaughter upon his left arm, his cocked hat upon his head, for he still wore the discarded garments of the day of the decapitated ruler — it was a point of honor with him not to recognize any fashion which had been brought in by the Republicans —stepped forward, a lackey hastened to greet him with a low bow.

"Whom shall I announce?" he asked with a stare of surprise at the quaint yet commanding old figure. As usual the marquis had put on his best clothes and wore

all his orders. He might have stepped from the gallery of L'Œil de Bœuf at Versailles a decade before.

"Announce Vice-admiral the Marquis de Vaudémont of the Royal Navy of France," he answered calmly.

"But —" stammered the man, "we have no — "

"Announce me!" interrupted the marquis, decisively.

"The *ci-dev* —" trembled upon the lips of the lackey.

The marquis caught the detested phrase just in time.

"Announce me just as I told you," he said in a low, fierce whisper.

"Vice-admiral the Marquis de Vaudémont of the Royal Navy of France!"

The marquis was determined not to sail under false colors in that assemblage. The lackey's voice was high and shrill. It rang through the hall above the laughter and the babble of the crowd, above the music, above the patter of many footsteps. The astonishing announcement petrified everybody into a momentary silence. Instantly all eyes were turned toward the door.

The marquis did not quail before the curious glances shot at him. He held his five feet seven inches as erect as a topgallant mast; nor did his granddaughter, perhaps an inch taller than he, standing by his side, blench before the gaze of the people. One was brilliant enough, the other beautiful enough, to have attracted attention had they been unannounced. The momentary silence was broken by the surge of the company toward the door where they stood. At the same instant the intermitted conversation began again with a furious babel of question and comment.

By the marquis' directions Aurore had remained in an anteroom, so the two were alone. In the front rank of the crowd which moved toward them was an enormous man with a great shock of black hair and flashing bright eyes. His huge bulk was covered by the brilliant uniform of a general of division. Authoritatively forcing himself through the mass by thrusting all in his way aside, he stopped directly before the marquis.

"How now? Who is this?" he cried, in a thunderous voice that comported well with his huge proportions. "What do you mean, citizen, by announcing Vice-admiral de Vaudémont of the Royal Navy of France?"

He turned his fierce gaze toward the lackey, who trembled before he spoke.

"Monsieur," said the marquis, calmly, not a bit perturbed by the other's towering figure and roaring speech — the vice-admiral could have faced an oncoming ship-of-the-line without turning an eyelash — "do not berate your servant. I am a vice-admiral of the Royal Navy of France and the Marquis de Vaudémont besides. I compelled the man so to announce me."

The other looked down at the diminutive figure of the marquis and laughed contemptuously.

"You!" he said. "You compelled —"

"Monsieur," returned the vice-admiral coolly, gently disengaging his granddaughter's hand, "you wear a sword. I take it that you know how to use it. Cease

your laughter at once, sir, or you will find that I can compel even you — "

The burly general officer lifted his arm and snapped his fingers.

"Ho, there!" he shouted to one of his guards. "Sergeant of the guard, arrest this — "

"General Kléber," said a tall, striking-looking man who had just forced his way through the crowd, whose flat nose and full lips showed that he had negro blood in his veins.

"What is it, Dumas?"

"General Bonaparte's compliments to you, and he wishes you to bring the strangers to him in his cabinet yonder, at once."

"Come, then," said Kléber, roughly.

"Gladly," answered the vice-admiral. "I came here especially to see that general."

"Well, you won't be so glad after you have seen him, probably," said Kléber, turning his back on the marquis. "He doesn't like your kind."

"This way, monsieur. This way, mademoiselle," more courteously said the mulatto, who also wore the brilliant uniform of a general, as he pointed after the towering figure of Kléber.

The multitude gave way before their advance, although the people crowded as close as they could in order to see the strange figure made by the old man in his old-fashioned dress, almost forgotten by that generation, and the fresh beauty of the young woman who swept along by his side like a goddess. In a few

moments General Dumas, who was as polite as he was brave, drew back the hangings over a doorway and motioned them to enter.

At the other end of a room, by the side of a table covered with despatches, stood a little officer, hat on head. He stared at them intently from his brilliant eyes, and when he realized that one of them was a woman, he instantly removed his plumed chapeau and tossed it on the table.

"You were announced," he said in sharp, incisive tones, as the two drew near to him, "as the Vice-admiral the Marquis de Vaudémont of the Royal Navy of France, sir. How is that?"

"I am the Vice-admiral the Marquis de Vaudémont of the Royal Navy of France."

The little officer snapped his fingers impatiently.

"Sir," he said, "what foolish play of words is this? There is no Royal Navy of France. What is left of it is there," pointing toward Aboukir, "under the flag of the Republic."

"I gave my name, a title that has been borne by my fathers for generations, my rank as I won it with my sword, as it was conferred upon me by my King. I could not come before you under false pretences. Hence the announcement."

"And the lady, sir?"

"My granddaughter, the Comtesse de Vaudémont."

"Mademoiselle," said Bonaparte, abruptly, "I proffer you my homage."

He was a connoisseur in the beauty of women, as he

was in the strength of men, this little general, and his glance enveloped her with an admiration so swift, so keen, so manifest, and so searching, that for the moment it almost disconcerted her.

"La Salle, Eugène, Marmont! A chair, some of you, for mademoiselle and the Marquis de Vaudémont, her grandfather, of the Royal Navy of France."

He smiled satirically as he spoke.

"Sir," said the vice-admiral, seating himself by the side of Louise, an example which General Bonaparte followed, "I would not accept your hospitality, I would not sit with you, were it not that age and infirmity and the fatigues of this night, past and to come, entitle me to consider myself."

"What, pray, have been the fatigues of the night past, and what are those to come?" asked Bonaparte, curiously. "Why have you come here? Where have you come from? What do you wish with me? Speak, monsieur."

He fired his questions at the vice-admiral as rapidly as discharges from a battery.

"Monsieur, you are General Bonaparte?" he asked.

"I am."

"Where have I seen you, monsieur?" said the marquis, somewhat irrelevantly, gazing at the general intently.

"I have been asking myself that question," said Bonaparte.

"At Toulon!" exclaimed Louise, suddenly.

"Ah, exactly! You have a keen memory, mademoi-

selle. I recall it now. You were against the wall, our friends, the *sans culottes*, were about to cut you down."

"And you interposed," exclaimed the marquis. "The little officer on the horse! Monsieur, when the world rang with the name of Bonaparte I did not dream that you—"

"That I was he? Would it have made your antagonism any the less pronounced, my dear sir?" queried Bonaparte, intently.

"Not in the least, sir. I allow no obligations which I personally may owe to bind me in my duty to my King. I did promise myself, however, that after the restoration of his Majesty, whom God protect and bring back speedily to France, I would see that your life was spared. That promise, monsieur," said the old man, composedly, "I shall be ready to keep should you call upon me."

Bonaparte laughed.

"I shall call upon you without fail, my friend, should the contingency ever arise."

"And I shall not fail you, sir."

"Exactly. Now, monsieur," continued the general, "your errand? I would not seem discourteous, but time is pressing and there is much to do."

"General Bonaparte, my party—"

"Who is in your party?"

"My granddaughter here, her maid, and my servant, were bound from Genoa to La Vendée in a Neapolitan vessel. We were captured by *Le Tonnant*, Captain Jean

Garron. Instead of reporting the capture to you, sir, he detained us aboard his ship and said nothing."

"General La Salle," said Bonaparte, turning to a bright young officer, "was any report made of this capture to headquarters?"

"No, General," answered the man.

"Proceed, monsieur."

"Garron, who had been an ancient retainer of my family, desired to marry this young lady."

"But he has a wife in France!"

"God pity her!" said the marquis.

"Why did you not appeal to me?" asked Bonaparte.

"We were not permitted. There were — papers — in my baggage. They would — have — incriminated — "

"I see," said Bonaparte, frowning. "And with these papers in his possession Garron thought to force your consent? The scoundrel! How did you get here?"

"There was an English prisoner on the ship. You recall the frigate captured just after you left Malta?"

Bonaparte nodded.

"Her captain was wounded and brought aboard *Le Tonnant.* Do you remember, monsieur, that night in Toulon there was a young officer with us?"

"Yes."

"That was he. He loves my granddaughter and I have at last consented to his suit."

"He is a fortunate man, mademoiselle," interrupted Bonaparte, smiling kindly at Louise, who found herself blushing deeply under the ardent gaze of the young Frenchmen crowding round them.

"My servant betrayed me — as I supposed — and wormed himself into the confidence of Garron," continued the marquis. "We were in the cabin together to-night, a few hours since, and Brébœuf — "

"Who is he?"

"The servant I speak of, monsieur. He seized Garron, forced him to place a boat, which he had summoned alongside, at our disposal, and we came here."

"The English captain?"

"Came as far as the wharf."

"And then?"

"As he was armed, he forced us to leave the boat and went away in her himself."

"Where?"

"To seek Admiral Nelson and the English."

"Ha!" said Bonaparte, sharply.

"Pardon, sir," interrupted another officer.

"What is it, Beauharnais?" asked Bonaparte, impatiently.

"Some papers came from Captain Garron this afternoon addressed to you and marked urgent."

"Where are they?"

"I laid them on your desk, General. Here they are, sir," said the young man, after rummaging a moment among the papers on the desk.

The vice-admiral started as he recognized the packet. He thought swiftly a moment. Should he endeavor to prevent the general from reading the papers? Bonaparte gave him no time to act. He broke the seal, tore off the wrapper hastily, and examined the

documents enclosed. He read with incredible swiftness and soon mastered the contents of the papers. When he had finished he looked keenly at the marquis.

"A conspirator, a royalist, a rebel, — La Vendée!" he muttered, frowning. "Is this true, monsieur?"

"Sir, I believe it to be."

"And you come here, here in my presence, sir," said Bonaparte, harshly, striking the table furiously as he spoke, "and admit it! 'Tis past belief!"

"Monsieur," said the marquis, "that I have put my head in the lion's mouth I am fully aware. You can do no less than decree my death. I am ready. I have, however, information of such grave importance to communicate to you concerning Garron that I venture to hope you will not neglect the appeal of a gentleman in behalf of his granddaughter, and perhaps for his grandson as well."

CHAPTER XXVIII

CAPTAIN HONORÉ'S CONFESSION

At this moment Colonel Marmont stepped forward from the door which he had been guarding.

"General," he said, saluting, "there is a young officer of your guard outside who desires to see you upon urgent business."

"Who is it?"

"Captain Honoré, sir."

"Ah!" said the general. "Bid him wait outside a moment, Marmont. If I read these papers aright, sir," continued Bonaparte, turning to the marquis, "this will be your grandson who is mentioned therein as engaged in a conspiracy to abduct me."

"I fear so," answered the marquis, while the officers of the staff started in surprise.

"We shall have a family reunion, hey, monsieur? He comes just in time. Was this a prearranged — "

"Sir!" interrupted the marquis, hastily. "He does not know that we are within three thousand miles of him. 'Tis fate, sir."

"Happy or otherwise," said Bonaparte; "we shall see. Meanwhile, your paper."

"Some one else," returned the marquis, slowly, "might exact a promise." He looked keenly at the

general. "I shall not do so, sir. I appeal to your honor as a soldier and a gentleman."

Without hesitation he handed the paper which Macartney had signed to the little officer.

"A traitor!" exclaimed Bonaparte, rising and crushing the paper in his hand after he had read it. "I shall deal with him. Monsieur, you have appealed to me in behalf of this lady and have trusted me with the determination of her future. I pledge you the honor of a Frenchman and of a soldier that her protection will be my pleasure; she shall be as sacred as my sister."

"And my grandson, monsieur?"

"As to that, wait! Will you withdraw with your granddaughter into the anteroom and remember that whatever happens you are to make no sign, that you must not come out under pain of my displeasure?"

"Sir," said the marquis, "deal gently with the lad."

"You condemn his course?" asked Bonaparte.

The old man was honest. He could plead for his grandson; he could not betray his cause.

"Would that I could say so, monsieur," he answered bravely, "but in the service of the King — "

"Enough! You will retire there. Marmont, admit Captain Honoré."

A young man, clad in the gorgeous uniform of the guard, stepped through the open door, walked rapidly up the room, clicked his heels together before his general, and saluted. His resemblance to his sister was so marked that everybody in the room started with surprise.

"You wish to see me, Captain Honoré?"

"Yes, General, but — " he looked about him — "alone."

"Gentlemen," said Bonaparte, "you will withdraw to the other end of the room."

"But, General, is it safe?" said Kléber, while Eugène de Beauharnais, a stepson of Bonaparte, presuming on his relationship, bent lower and whispered: —

"You know, sir, what has just been disclosed. Would it not be best at least for me — "

"All of you, go!" said Bonaparte, imperiously. "I trust myself entirely to brave young Captain Honoré."

"And you may well do so, sir," said Honoré, eagerly.

"Why should I not trust you?" asked Bonaparte, looking intently at the young man. "At the storming of Alexandria you were by my side; I have not forgotten that Turk who lunged at me just before you cut him down. It was you, was it not, who threw yourself in front of me when the wavering square almost broke before the charge of the mamelukes at the battle of the Pyramids? I owe you much, sir."

"You have paid me in full, sir," cried the young officer, "my commission as captain — "

"You will go higher, Captain Honoré, I predict."

"No, General."

"Why not?"

"Because I am come to — "

"To what? Out with it!"

"To resign my commission and surrender myself into your hands."

"Ha!" said Bonaparte. "And why?"

"Sir, I am the Comte Honoré de Vaudémont. My father was killed in the Terror —"

"I had no hand in that."

"No. My grandfather is, or was, rather, a vice-admiral in the ancient Royal Navy of France. At present he is engaged in fomenting rebellion against the Republic in La Vendée."

"Is this true?"

"On my honor, sir."

"Proceed."

"I was an officer in the Austrian army. Boy as I was, sir, I fought against you at Arcola, at Castiglione, at Rivoli, at — in short, wherever I could."

"You know how I can fight, then?"

"I do, General."

"Go on."

"Having resigned my commission after the Peace of Campo Formio, I found myself without employment."

"What did you then?"

"When I heard rumors of this expedition, I sought a commission in your army, sir."

"Had you tired of fighting against me — the Republic, that is?"

"Not at that time, sir."

"Why did you enter our service, then?"

"To — to — kidnap you, General. You were the only obstacle between the King and France. I would do his Majesty, and France as well, a service by removing you."

"Well?"

"That is all, sir."

"And have you abandoned that design?"

"I have."

"Why?"

"General, I did not know you — before."

"And now?"

"I come to confess, to place myself in your hands. I could not accept your promotion or remain longer in your army without telling you."

"Why, again?"

The general's eyes searched the young man as if he would wrest from his officer the most secret thought of his heart even.

"I do not know," answered Captain Honoré, sustaining the intent and penetrating scrutiny of his captain with as much firmness as he could muster. "I cannot help it. I believe that the greatness of France lies with you. Her destiny is in your hands. At Toulon, on the ship, here in Egypt, I have watched you. We of the old nobility have thought of you almost as Antichrist. We were wrong. The past is gone, sir. You are the future. As between the King — may God forgive me! — and yourself, I have chosen — "

The young man, who had spoken with all the fire and enthusiasm of his day and nation, hesitated, reluctant yet insistent to say the final word.

"Which?" asked his general, imperiously.

"You! If, after what I have told you, you think

me worthy of any trust or confidence, if I may still serve in your army — as a volunteer, monsieur — in any capacity — I beg you to command me."

"Who were your confederates in the plot?"

"That, sir, I implore you not to ask. I cannot tell. For myself, I have abandoned it, and my withdrawal renders the whole attempt null and void. You will hear no more of it. I have placed myself unreservedly at your disposal."

"Why do you do this?"

"I said I do not know. I cannot help it. I love you," said the romantic boy — he was scarcely twenty-one — "that's all."

"Your associates," said Bonaparte, reading from the paper, "were Barbaloux, De Charretein, D'Ésterrette, and that Italian Salvatore."

"*Mon Dieu!* General, how do you know these names?" exclaimed Captain Honoré, profoundly surprised, and terrified as well.

"I know everything, my young friend."

"Are you a god, then?"

"'Tis very simple. Your grandfather told me."

"My grandfather! Impossible, sir! He is in La Vendée!"

"Not so."

"Where is he, then?"

Bonaparte stepped to the side of the room, seized the heavy curtain depending before the door, and threw it quickly back.

"There!" he cried, pointing to the recess.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE COMTE CHANGES HIS ALLEGIANCE

Captain Honoré stood as if rooted to the ground.

"Monsieur," he said, "what has happened? I thought you were in La Vendée."

"And would God I had been there, sir," answered the marquis, coldly, stepping forth as he spoke, "ere I heard one bearing my name declare himself a traitor to his King."

For a moment Comte Honoré hung his head before the fiery words of his grandfather. Then he faced the old man. He, too, was a de Vaudémont.

"Sir," he said, "believe me —"

"Not another word!" said his grandfather. "Not in three hundred years have the de Vaudémonts failed in devotion to the throne."

"With respect to your age, sir, and the ties of blood and affection by which I am bound to you, I will be heard!"

"Give the lad a chance, monsieur," said Bonaparte, coolly helping himself to a pinch of snuff.

"Not from any motives of self-interest," continued the young comte, "nor for any other reason but because I love my country, sir, have I attached myself to the fortunes of General Bonaparte. Sir, had you seen him

as I have seen him, had you known him as foeman and as friend, you would realize that he is the future of France. As such, sir, I salute him. It is he who has saved our distracted country. He will make it in the future, as it has been in the past, great among the nations of the world. And as a king I offer him my sword, my heart. All that I have is his. He is the King!"

Bonaparte flushed and swept a glance around the room. Dumas leaned against the door with a smile upon his face, half humorous, half pitying; the burly Kléber stood with his hands clasped behind him, his head bent forward, frowning. The others, younger men, were watching the dialogue between the marquis and the comte with the greatest attention.

The King of France? Nay, that were too narrow a confine to limit the little man whose shadow even then loomed so large upon the horizon of civilization. The King? Bonaparte smiled. The time was not yet. He was not to be swept from the clear purposes of his vision by the enthusiasm of a romantic boy.

"*Vive la République!*" he said, throwing back his head. "I am the servant, not the master, of France, citizens and friends!"

And there was no one to tell them that the servant was above the master. Instantly the room rang with cries. Like Cæsar on the Lupercal, their hero had refused a crown!

"Monsieur," said the marquis, turning to Bonaparte, "what is this Republic to which you have engaged

yourself? To which this foolish boy has given his allegiance? I am an old man. I have lived long and seen much. I have done some service to the state. My words are not without weight in the councils of the King. Give over this mad, this impossible scheme! Restore the ancient monarchy. You have the power. In addition to the consciousness of having done right, of having reëstablished your rightful King upon his throne, you can name any reward. You and all of you! I promise it on the faith of a gentleman. You shall be a constable of France, the King will ennoble you — what you will."

"Sir," said Bonaparte, smiling, "my patent of nobility dates from the battle of Montenotte. What! Shall we undo the terrible work of the past five years to bring back a King of shreds and patches? Bah! If he wants a kingdom, let him take one. We recognize no rights but the will of the people and the right of the sword!"

Again the room rang with cheers. When the tumult had subsided the marquis began again.

"I made you an offer, sir, as one gentleman to another. You please me," he continued. "I owe you much. When the day comes call upon me. I shall not be ungrateful."

"Um!" said Bonaparte. "We have not settled that other matter yet."

"True," said the vice-admiral. "I had forgotten that. May I ask what you propose to do with my — that young man yonder?"

"Your grandson?"

"Grandson no longer."

"But my brother still!" cried Louise, gliding past him and taking Honoré's hands in her own.

"*Bien*, mademoiselle!" said Bonaparte, looking approvingly yet keenly from the marquis to the comtesse as a sudden suspicion lodged in his mind. "Here is no collusion?" he asked.

"Monsieur," said the old man, "you have just cause to doubt the fidelity of those who bear the name of de Vaudémont. I pardon your insinuation. I assure you on my honor that no inkling of my purpose, or of the discovery of the plot to abduct you, could possibly have been communicated by me to this unhappy young man."

"And you, sir?"

"'Twas my conscience, General, brought me here. I knew not that the Marquis de Vaudémont was nearer than La Vendée."

"I believe you, Major de Vaudémont."

"Major, sir?"

"Must I repeat myself, Major de Vaudémont?"

"Not that name, General, if it pleases you," interrupted the marquis.

"Very well. He has already won honor as Captain Honoré. He shall make that name as great as your own. La Salle, will you make out a commission for Captain Honoré as major, and an order detaching him from my guard and placing him on my personal staff? I trust him, you see, monsieur. A man may change his allegiance—"

"Not such a man as I, sir," said the old man.

"Perhaps even you. It is my hope, sir, to bring back to France some day those nobles and gentlemen who survived the Terror."

"Your Republic killed my son," said the marquis, gloomily.

"I had no hand in that," answered Bonaparte. "I was but a boy in the Terror. When I was able to do it I stopped it. There shall be no more of it in France."

"Sir, I am an old man, as I have told you and as you observe. What you do with me matters little. May I take it that you will protect my granddaughter, this young lady?"

"I will look after her," said Honoré, quickly.

"Not with my consent, sir," said the vice-admiral, coldly. "We have no relationship with such as you. There may be an excuse for General Bonaparte and these others — there is none for a de Vaudémont. I have eaten the King's bread, I am the King's man."

"But I have not, and I am not!"

"Be it so. You have voluntarily cut yourself off from me and mine. I wish to hear nothing from you."

"Give him time," said the general to the distracted young officer. "Monsieur, as I said before, I pledge you my honor for the safety of your granddaughter. Mademoiselle, you may trust me."

"I do, sir," answered Louise, giving him her hand, "as unreservedly as my brother loves you."

Bonaparte took her hand, and bending low over it kissed it.

"You are my witnesses, gentlemen," he cried, turning to the group at the end of the room, "this lady is as my own sister."

"And as to myself, General," said the marquis, indifferently, "I would know your pleasure."

"Sir," said Bonaparte, "I have sworn fealty and devotion to your granddaughter; from this hour your grandson is one of my most trusted officers; think you I could be rigorous toward yourself under such circumstances? Go, you are free!"

"Sir," said the marquis, "I warn you that the first use I shall make of my freedom will be to offer my poor services to my King."

"Be it so. Next to a stanch friend I love a determined enemy. It would have been a pleasure to have seen your flag flying over the fleets of France. We lack a sea officer. There was de Suffren. There was that mad Scotsman, Paul Jones. Here are you."

The marquis shook his head.

"Oh, I did not mean to bribe you! I was only thinking. You are free to go where you will, to abide here, to return to the fleet, to go back to Europe at the first convenient opportunity. You may take a message from me to the man you call your Regent if you will."

"And that is?"

"Tell him that France awaits his coming. He may take it, if he can, sword in hand."

"General," said the giant Kléber, impulsively running up to the little man and taking him by the

shoulders, "let me embrace you! You are as great as the universe!"

"Thank you, my good Kléber," said the general, patting him on the shoulder as a child might caress a huge dog. "But we have more to do, gentlemen. That traitor Garron —"

He read aloud to them all the damning agreement that Macartney had signed for him.

"What did you say was the state of affairs on *Le Tonnant*, monsieur?" asked Bonaparte, as soon as the execrations with which those present received the news permitted him to be heard.

"He is guarded in his own cabin by my man, Brébœuf. He will be safe until morning."

"A rare man this Brébœuf."

"Rare indeed, monsieur."

"Too good to lose," said Bonaparte, who pulled out his watch and looked at it. "It is past two in the morning. It is an eighteen or twenty mile ride to Aboukir. Call it two hours. We can scarcely start before half after — half an hour to get a boat, that will be five; half an hour more to reach the flagship; half an hour more for details and to allow for mistakes. Say six o'clock. That will do. Gentlemen, I ride to Aboukir to-night! Junot, have a troop of light horse brought up. Which of you will ride with me? I go to punish a traitor, to save the life of a brave man!"

The officers crowded around, protesting and acclaiming their willingness, nay their anxiety.

"Kléber, you and Dumas remain here in charge. The rest, to your horses! We'll start from the Palace gates. You, monsieur?"

"I am an old man, General, but to save my ancient servant's life I would ride with you if I died at the end of the journey."

"Good!" said Bonaparte. "And you, mademoiselle?"

"I go with my grandfather."

"Ha, Junot!" called Bonaparte. "What is it?"

"Captain Gerard's troop will be here at once, sir," said Junot, saluting.

"Have a horse saddled for mademoiselle here."

"My maid is in the anteroom yonder," said Louise, "she will go too."

"Another for the maid," ordered Bonaparte. "Is that all?"

"That is all, sir."

"You will need to change your shoes for riding boots, monsieur," continued Bonaparte, as the officers filed out of the room leaving them alone. "Perhaps you will honor me by —" He put out an exceedingly small and aristocratic-looking foot, of which he was justly proud, "I think my own will fit you."

He struck a bell as he spoke and directed the attendant who answered it to provide the marquis with boots and gloves.

"Your courtesy overwhelms me," said the old man. His hand went into his bosom. From it he brought forth his snuff-box. He hesitated a moment, opened it,

looked quizzically at Bonaparte, who stood smiling before him.

"I never thought to offer courtesies to a Republican, but, General — will you honor me?"

"'Tis my honor, monsieur," returned the little officer, bowing and taking a generous pinch.

CHAPTER XXX

RIDING FOR BRÉBŒUF

PREPARATIONS for the ride were soon made. The old marquis was booted and gloved and Bonaparte even procured a riding skirt for Louise. Before they started out the general insisted that the marquis and his party should partake of some refreshments to enable them the better to sustain the fatigues of their journey.

"A soldier," said the little man, "and a sailor, too, should eat whenever and wherever he can. We have a hard ride before us."

It was well that they complied with his advice, for neither one nor the other had ever participated in such a desperate gallop.

"Time," said Bonaparte, at starting, "is the most valuable thing in life. The treasures of the world are nothing to it. Therefore we will ride fast. If the pace be too swift for you, monsieur, mademoiselle, drop behind and half the troop shall escort you."

"The faster the better," said the marquis, "there is nothing so valuable to me as my servant's life."

"To horse, then!" ordered Bonaparte, swinging himself into the saddle.

Next to him upon his left side was the marquis. Immediately in the rear came Louise and her brother,

with Aurore close behind her mistress. Surrounding them, La Salle, Junot, Beauharnais, and the other officers of the staff. Then to the rear of all were the troopers, with videttes thrown out on either side. The road ran along the shore. The state of the tide left the sand upon the beach uncovered. The going was absolutely perfect. They started off at a fast trot, which, so soon as they passed outside the limits of the walls of the town, was increased to a gallop.

The general rode in silence. No one spoke save now and then a whispered word from Honoré to his sister. The moonlight turned the sand into silver and frosted the wavelets of the sea, but they had neither time nor opportunity to mark it as their bodies rose and fell in the sweeping stride of the horses — galloping to rescue Brébœuf.

The dawn was graying the desert when they drew rein at the landing at Aboukir. Boats from the ships were already making their way to the shore. Bonaparte flung himself from his saddle, walked out on the temporary landing-stage, hailed the first boat that came near, handed the marquis, Louise with Aurore, and the young comte with Beauharnais and La Salle into the first one, followed himself, and directing the rest of the staff to come in the next boat, ordered the men to row him direct to the flagship.

Arrived there, the general boarded *L'Orient*, bidding the others wait in the cutter. So soon as he stood upon the deck he called the astonished officer and directed him to awaken Admiral Brueys and say to him that

General Bonaparte had come aboard and wished to see him immediately.

In a few moments the little general, whose patience was of the shortest, was ushered into the admiral's cabin. Presently he returned to the deck, followed by the admiral. As they crossed the quarter-deck to the gangway Bonaparte cast a look toward *Le Tonnant*, lying close to the *L' Orient*, being in fact the next astern of the vice-admiral in the long line. Her crew was already stirring about on the decks.

"Shall I call my barge?" asked the admiral.

"No, I have a boat here. 'Twill save time. Look! What are they doing at the yard yonder?"

The general pointed and then nimbly dropped down the battens to the cutter, where Brueys followed him.

"What is that?" continued Bonaparte.

"They are rigging a whip on the yard-arm," said Brueys.

"For what purpose?" asked Bonaparte, watching the other vessel.

"Possibly for an execution, sir."

"We shall be too late!" cried Louise, clasping her hands, for she instantly divined what was about to happen.

"Give me leave, General," said Brueys. "Give way, men! Hard! The life of a brave man is at stake! A gold piece for each of you if we reach *Le Tonnant* in time."

The still water in the bay curled about the bows of the cutter. The stout ash oars bent under the vigorous

play of the brawny sailors, as Brueys urged them to greater and greater speed.

"This," said Bonaparte, as they approached nearer the vessel, "is the Marquis de Vaudémont."

"I served under him once," smiled Admiral Brueys.

"Would that you were under me still," said the old marquis, indomitably.

"I serve the Republic now," answered the Republican sailor, imperturbably.

"See!" cried Louise.

A man's head appeared above the rail of the ship. He was being dragged upon a grating which had been fixed there. His hands were bound. Two men stood beside him and hauled him up. The leaping sun shot over the eastern wastes and the light of the morning fell upon the man's face. It was Brébœuf. They were close aboard *Le Tonnant* now.

"Faster! faster!" cried Bonaparte.

"Shall we be in time?" asked the marquis.

"We must!"

"I will hail the deck if necessary," said Brueys.

"No, wait," said Bonaparte, looking up. "The noose is not adjusted yet. He will be given time to pray."

The cutter was right under the bows of the ship now. In another thirty seconds she swung in toward the gangway. Before she had fairly come to a rest Bonaparte sprang at the battens like a boy. Brueys motioned the old marquis, and he, as if the terrible fatigues and anxieties of the night were as nothing, nimbly followed the general. Then came the Republi-

can vice-admiral and Louise, Aurore and her brother, and the rest.

* * * * * * *

The hours that Garron had spent alone in his cabin with the silent Brébœuf were the most frightful in his history. The Breton would have shot him, or, better, choked him to death as being least likely to attract attention, had not his master directed him to spare the man's life. For what purpose Brébœuf did not divine. It was enough that he had been told to do a certain thing. He was one of those ancient men who obeyed absolutely, blindly.

At first Garron thought to bribe him. He besought him, offered him every inducement which his brain could suggest — money without stint. The storeroom in his cabin was filled with plunder. He had not been on the top wave of the Revolution since it began without amassing a vast treasure, which, with the covetousness and caution of the French peasant, he had carefully preserved.

Old Brébœuf was deaf to every entreaty. He did not even deign to answer the man. He sat there, his pistol held carelessly in his hand, his eyes apparently closed, looking as indifferent as if he had been alone. Once Garron thought to take advantage of this seeming carelessness. The instant he made a threatening move he found himself covered with the weapon. No tiger ever watched its hapless prey with more apparent carelessness, yet with more real ferocity, than the silent Brébœuf guarded the craven Garron.

The silence of the old sailor grated on the nerves of the prisoner. He broke down completely at last and sobbed and cried and pleaded as if he had been a child. If he could only be freed from the terrible espionage of that relentless Breton! For a moment even! Of course Bonaparte must be in possession of that paper by this time, but all was not hopeless. He could send his men to the yards in the dark and make sail. He could cut cable and make a run for it. *Le Tonnant* was one of the fastest ships in the navy, one of the finest in the fleet. With the start that he might get in the night he had a fair chance of escaping. Brueys could not weaken his force by detaching a squadron to go after him.

Out yonder in the blue Mediterranean were Nelson and the English. Salvation! Reward! Here was nothing but this terrible old man. He studied the sailor's face until every crease upon the craggy and weather-beaten countenance was imprinted upon his mind. He strove to recall what he could of the man's characteristics. He appealed to him in every possible way. He could do nothing, nothing!

The dawn that came stealing through the cabin windows found him crouching before the rigid figure of the old sailor, a miserable broken wreck. During the long, slow hours he had died a thousand deaths. The entrance of his executive officer, who came in for the morning's orders, aroused him finally.

"My God, at last!" he cried, his agony extorting from him even that acknowledgment of a power Divine.

"Have that man seized at once! He is a traitor! He has betrayed me! I have passed such a night of agony—" The man's nerves gave way again. He buried his face in his hands and cried like a baby.

"Your weapon, Brébœuf," said Captain Dupetit-Thouars, approaching him.

Brébœuf could have killed him and then himself, but he had no orders. He had been told to guard Garron until morning and then wait. He waited. He handed his pistol to Dupetit-Thouars without a word. As soon as the sailor was disarmed, Garron staggered to his feet and struck him again and again in the face, until it was cut and bleeding.

"Stop! stop!" cried Dupetit-Thouars, shocked beyond measure, finally dragging Garron away by main force. "Are you mad?"

"If you had sat here with that iron hell-hound the night long, as I have, you would be mad, too."

"What has he done?"

"He forced me to permit the English prisoner, the marquis, the women, all my prisoners, to escape last night. They overpowered me in this cabin. They held their weapons against my heart and compelled me to give an order to enable them to get off. They have gone. It was this fiend that did it, and by God, he shall pay for it!"

"Is this true?" asked Dupetit-Thouars, turning to Brébœuf.

Like everybody on the ship, he would not take Garron's statement under oath. Brébœuf nodded.

"You shall die, you shall die!" shouted Garron.

"But after a court-martial?" suggested Dupetit-Thouars.

"Am I the captain of this ship, or are you?" asked Garron. "He shall be hanged at once, sir."

He struck the bell upon the table sharply. An instant after a marine appeared.

"Summon the guard," ordered Garron. "Tell the officer of the watch to rig a whip on the fore yard-arm, and be quick about it!"

Then, as the sea soldiers filled the cabin, he directed them to seize and bind Brébœuf. To these preparations the Breton made no resistance whatever. His arms were bound behind him, and he was roughly hauled from the cabin to the deck. Thither he was followed by the crazed Garron, Dupetit-Thouars vainly protesting.

It was full morning now. Garron glanced across the water. He stared anxiously at the sea and the shore. There was no evidence that any message had arrived from Alexandria concerning him yet. Perhaps Bonaparte had not returned, perhaps the marquis had not been able to see him. He might still have a few hours of respite. That dash to sea would be infinitely more hazardous in open daylight than at night. Still it would be his only chance. He would try it. But first he would hang this man. The animosity which he had cherished toward the family of the marquis was now centred upon Brébœuf.

The preparations were simple and were speedily

made. Garron did not even go through the formality of calling all hands. By his directions two of the sailors were ordered to drag Brébœuf to the grating which had been rigged on the rail. A noose had been cast on the end of the whip depending from the starboard fore yard-arm. It was passed around Brébœuf's neck. Garron himself gave instructions for the watch to tail on to the fall which had been led through a snatch block on the deck.

There was murmuring and rebellion among the crew, but they were unarmed. The marines were drawn up upon the quarter-deck, their pieces loaded. There was no doubt that they would fire if Garron gave the order. Proverbial hatred between sailors and marines was as strong in the French as in any other navy. Besides, no one cared especially for Brébœuf. He had been in constant attendance upon Garron and had not made any friends among the crew. Indeed the unpopularity of the captain was in a measure shared by his servant.

Every man holding the fall of the tackle knew that there had been no court-martial, that the law would not sanction this summary execution, but it was none of their affair. Under the circumstances they had nothing to do but obey orders. Another moment would have seen the Breton run up to the yard-arm. Just as Garron was about to give the signal Brébœuf broke the silence.

"A priest!" he cried.

"There are no priests in the Republic!" said Garron, brutally.

"A prayer!" entreated the Breton.

"Pray yourself, curse you!" said the captain. "Pick up that rope!" he shouted to the men.

They had heard Brébœuf's appeal and had instinctively relaxed their hold upon it.

"Give him time for a word, Captain Garron," said Dupetit-Thouars.

"Not another second! Seize the fall! Set taut!"

The words, "Sway away!" trembled on his lips, as the reluctant men took up the slack of the rope, when through the crowd at the gangway there burst a small but tremendous figure.

CHAPTER XXXI

"ALAS FOR THE KING!"

"STOP!" he cried, in a voice of authority which could not be mistaken.

"Bonaparte!" gasped Garron, blanching with terror.

"Release that man!" cried the little general. "Instantly!" He stamped his foot upon the deck. "Unbind him! How dare you?"

The men before him fairly shrank back and made room for him. They recognized him at once. Bonaparte turned to Garron. The sailor was twice as big as the general. Bonaparte seized him by the shoulder and shook him as if he had been a rat.

"You dog!" he cried. "You infamous traitor! You would sell the Republic to the English!"

By this time others from the boat had come aboard. The officers on deck crowded aft. As soon as he was released Brébœuf fell at the feet of the marquis. The old man lifted him up.

"Not there," he said, "but here!" opening his arms and embracing him.

As he released him the eyes of the Breton fell upon Comte Honoré. With a glad cry he ran toward the young man, who greeted him in the same way. Even

Louise gave him both her hands and smiled at him while he kissed them.

"Saved!" gasped the old sailor.

"Yes, thanks to you, my good Brébœuf," said Louise.

"And to General Bonaparte," said Comte Honoré.

"Garron," said Bonaparte, having conferred a few moments with Brueys, "that paper?"

"It's a lie, it's a lie!" screamed Garron.

"I swear to you that I heard him bargain for it," said the marquis.

"And I, too," said Louise.

Bonaparte looked at Brébœuf. The Breton nodded his head.

"Citizens, this man offered to sell you to the English!" said Bonaparte, turning to the officers and raising his voice so that the whole crew could hear. By this time every officer and man on the ship was on deck. Forgetful of discipline, which was indeed laxly administered, they came crowding aft, and some of the more venturesome even stepped on the quarter-deck. A yell of rage and execration followed the general's words.

"Mercy!" cried Garron, sinking to his knees.

"That's not all," continued Bonaparte. "You knew that a plot against my life was in existence six weeks ago. Why didn't you declare it?"

"I only found it out last night. I sent the paper to you immediately."

"Another falsehood," said the marquis. "My baggage was searched when I was captured."

"I made the search, General," said Dupetit-Thouars. "I found papers there. I gave them to Captain Garron."

"He knew it himself!" shouted Garron, white with fear and passion.

"It is not true," indignantly protested Dupetit-Thouars at once.

"I was there," said the marquis. "This officer," pointing to Dupetit-Thouars, "knew nothing of the contents of the papers."

"Enough!" said Bonaparte, brusquely. "What punishment shall be meted out to him, comrades?"

"Hang him at the yard-arm!" shouted one of the officers, instantly.

Immediately his words were taken up by the crew of seven hundred men which made up the complement of the ship.

"Hang him!"

"Up with the traitor!"

"To the yard-arm with him!"

Such a roar of passion was blasted up from the decks of *Le Tonnant* as seemed to rive the heavens. Garron threw himself upon the deck. He grovelled before the stern figure of the little general. He clasped the general's feet in his hands.

"I confess it. For God's sake, let me live! Don't hang me! Protect me! Mademoiselle, you are a woman! Speak for me!"

"No one shall speak for you," said Bonaparte. "No one shall save you from the doom you have brought upon yourself."

"Hang him!"

"The whip, the whip!" came from the crowd.

"To the grating with him!"

The ship was the scene of a terrible confusion.

"Back!" cried Bonaparte, sternly. "We will not hang him," he cried, in spite of the ominous growl of rage and hatred that burst from the crowd. "He shall be shot here and now! On his own quarter-deck! Marines, there! Advance! Are your pieces loaded?"

"Yes, General," said the lieutenant in command.

"Captain Dupetit-Thouars, have that carrion taken to the poop-deck."

Shrieking, protesting, struggling vainly, Garron was seized and dragged to the poop-deck.

"Now, my lieutenant," said Bonaparte, turning to the marine officer, "take eight of your men up there. Shoot him when I give the word!"

In an instant the marines appointed had scampered up the ladder. They seemed to relish their duty. They ranged themselves on the starboard side of the poop, while Garron was dragged to the opposite side. He fell in a helpless huddle to the deck.

"To your knees!" ordered Bonaparte, sternly, "or I will have you bayoneted to death where you lie!"

Garron realized that all was hopeless. Some of the courage which had deserted him came back. He raised himself on one knee, resting one hand upon the deck, and glared at Bonaparte.

The general stood with a handkerchief lifted in the air. The eyes of the marine officer were fastened upon him.

"When I drop this handkerchief, monsieur," he said, "you will give the order to fire."

Garron presented a terrible picture. Flakes of foam lay upon his bloodless lips. His maddened eyes gleamed with hate and rage. He lifted his arm suddenly and moved as if to spring to a standing position. What was in his mind no one knew. Perhaps he meant to leap over the rail and strike Bonaparte where he stood. The general was too quick for him.

"Damn the Republic!" shouted Garron.

"Fire!" cried Bonaparte coolly, dropping the handkerchief.

The eight muskets crashed as one. The body of Garron half rose in the air, lunged forward, and then lay still. They could see a ghastly red blood-stain widening on the white deck as the smoke blew away.

"Justice is done! So perish all traitors to the Republic!" said Bonaparte, quietly.

"*Vive la République!*" came in a tremendous roar from the crew.

"Now," cried Bonaparte, fiercely, looking round suddenly, "what is the meaning of this disorder? Get back to your stations, men. Do you hear? Is this the discipline you allow in your fleet, Admiral Brueys?"

"Sir," stammered the astonished admiral, "the circumstances —"

"Under no circumstances," stormed the little general, "should discipline be relaxed!"

He made a step toward the men in the gangway. They fell back before him as if they too had been shot.

"Captain Dupetit-Thouars," said Bonaparte, "attend us in the cabin. Marquis, Admiral," he added, pointing aft, himself leading the way.

"Admiral Brueys," he said, when they reached the cabin under the poop, "you will make out an order transferring the command of *Le Tonnant* to Captain Dupetit-Thouars. The Marquis de Vaudémont—"

He did not finish the sentence, for, as he turned, the old marquis slowly sank to the floor, collapsed.

"Look to the old officer," cried Bonaparte, as with a faint scream Louise sprang to the side of her grandfather. The ship's doctor, who was present, bent over him.

"It is only a faint," he said, despatching one of the officers for restoratives.

"Ah, yes, the fatigues of the night. He is an old man. Deal tenderly with him," said Bonaparte.

"Your pardon, gentlemen," said the marquis, faintly, as he opened his eyes under the influence of the restoratives which had been promptly applied, "I am a very old man."

"You have done enough in the last twelve hours to break a much younger man, monsieur," said Bonaparte, kindly.

"Sir," answered the marquis, lifting himself up in Brébœuf's arms while Louise knelt by him chafing his hands, "you are an incomparable man. When I look upon you I despair. You have laid me under great obligations."

"Discharge them, then," said Bonaparte.

"How can I?"

"By giving me the lad here."

"My word, sir, but you seem to have him already," said the marquis.

"Not with your blessing, sir, and with your permission. Believe me, I love France. I shall make of it the brightest star in the firmament of nations. The boy — his fortune shall be mine."

"Be it so," said the marquis, wearily. "Honoré, you have chosen, not as I would have you choose, but having chosen, walk honorably in the path you have elected."

"Sir, my grandfather," faltered Honoré, kneeling by the old man's side and kissing his hand.

"But as for me," continued the marquis, "General Bonaparte, I am too old to change."

"Nor shall you. Will you come with me to Alexandria? Will you stay here and prepare to take passage on the first ship for France? We'll manage to land you somewhere else if you would not go there."

"Here, if it please you," said the marquis. "I am a sailor, and my granddaughter — "

"I was born on the sea, General," said Louise.

"And Captain Dupetit-Thouars I know of old," continued the marquis; "we have long been friends. We have seen our duties differently, but there is something to be said on the other side, perhaps. We will accept his hospitality if — "

"It is freely proffered you, sir. You are gladly welcome to my ship. I shall be honored," said the gallant Dupetit-Thouars, extending his hand.

"Good! And the English officer who escaped, Brueys?" asked the general.

"We can do nothing with him now, I fancy," said Admiral Brueys. "We might send out a frigate."

"As well search for a needle in a wheat-field," said Bonaparte. "He will apprise the English."

"Well, let them come," said Brueys, "I shall be glad to receive them."

Bonaparte's glance happened to fall upon Louise; a soft, beautiful flush was in her face at the mention of her lover.

"And you, too, would be glad to receive at least one of them, mademoiselle?" He laughed. "Well, when you have taken him, Brueys, send him to me. I will see what can be done. And you," said Bonaparte, approaching the gigantic Brébœuf. He was so small that the contrast between the two was laughable — only no one laughed at Bonaparte. The general stood on his tiptoes and took the big sailor by the ear.

"Ah, ah, my friend," he cried, "I came at the very moment. Will you serve me and the Republic?"

Brébœuf shook his head. He glanced toward the marquis, toward Louise, toward Honoré; he extended his arm and pointed to the little group, then laid his hand upon his heart.

"Well, well," said Bonaparte, in high good humor, "as you please. You are a brave man. Admiral Brueys, I don't like the fleet as it is. The English can turn your flanks if they come. This place is not defensible. They can mass upon one wing of your line

and crush it. You should take precaution to cover these flanks. If that cannot be done, you must go to Alexandria, or failing that, to Corfu, which is inaccessible to them. The future, the success of this expedition, depends upon you. When we have pacified Egypt India will fall into our hands — if we command the sea!"

"General," said Brueys, "we cannot get into Alexandria with these heavy ships, and there are not yet enough provisions in the fleet to enable us to go to Corfu. The English will not turn our flanks. They would not dare; and, anyway, should they appear we would get under way and meet them under sail."

"Very well," said Bonaparte, shrugging his shoulders. "Unfortunately, I am no sailor. One cannot be everything. Would to God I could be! What is your advice, monsieur?"

"Sir," answered the marquis, gravely, "I can give no advice to the enemy of my King."

"Bah!" said Bonaparte, scornfully. "Well, look to it, Brueys, look to it! See that you be not taken unawares. You have my warning. Good-by, Monsieur de Vaudémont. Come, gentlemen."

"Sir," said Louise, coming forward, "do not think because my grandfather loves the King that we are ungrateful. What you have done for me, for my brother, cannot be too highly estimated. I, too, have loved the King. I, too, am a de Vaudémont. But, forgive me, monsieur —" she said, turning to her grandfather, "perhaps, had I been a man, I, too, would be willing to

stand by my brother's side and follow your fortunes. From the bottom of my heart I thank you. I shall always pray for your welfare, for your happiness."

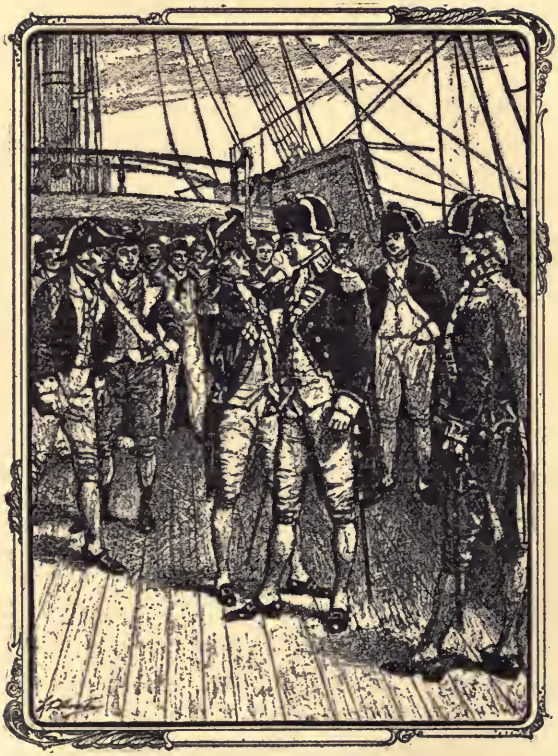
She took Bonaparte's hand in her own. Before he divined what she was about to do, she lifted it to her lips and kissed it. 'Twas an honor she would have paid to no one but her King.

"I thank you, mademoiselle," said Bonaparte, deeply touched. "Come back to France some day. She needs women like you. Permit me." He laid his hand gently upon her head, bent it slightly down to him, brushed his lips lightly across her forehead, and was gone.

"A wonderful man, a wonderful man!" murmured the marquis, thoughtfully, when they were alone again. "Alas, alas, for the King!"

Book VI

NELSON



CHAPTER XXXII

THE SIGNAL TORCH

When Macartney directed Captain Schneider to head for the open sea, after he left the marquis and Louise, he had not yet considered where he should go when he got an offing. The first thing for him to do was to get out of the harbor. The cutter was stopped by one of the guard boats as they drew out beyond the Pharos, but the pass which had been extorted from Garron prevented her detention, and when morning broke the towers of Alexandria were far astern. Then the Irishman set to work to consider his problem.

Now Macartney had no knowledge as to the exact whereabouts of Nelson. While the Mediterranean was not so large as the ocean, it was sufficiently capacious to make the finding of the admiral an extremely difficult undertaking. When it is remembered that the English fleet and the great French armada had been for a month practically in the same waters without catching sight of each other, the difficulty of Macartney's situation was evident. Find Nelson he must, and at the very earliest possible moment. But how?

He knew in just what a fever of anxiety his nervous little chief would be and what a blessed relief would be the assurance which he could give him by his tidings.

The necessity for haste was apparent, for Macartney had gathered during his captivity with the French that they might retire to Corfu, or Malta, or some strongly fortified base, where it would be impossible for the English to get at them. Indeed, no man with half an eye could believe that Brueys would remain in his untenable position in Aboukir Bay. The discovery of Garron's treachery would undoubtedly call Bonaparte's attention to that fact, if it had not already been observed by him, and the French might leave at any time.

Macartney had a sailor's pride in getting to Nelson as quickly as possible, but there was another reason which weighed heavily on his mind ; and that was, the sooner he found Nelson the sooner he would get back to Louise de Vaudémont. Love and duty, this time on the same side, quickened his wits and stimulated his imagination.

He strove to look at the problem, so far as he could, from the admiral's point of view. It was known that Nelson had been off Alexandria before the French arrived. What would he do next ? Macartney thought hard and deeply. The English commander would be certain that the French had gone eastward. If not to Egypt, then they must have gone to Syria, Asia Minor, or Constantinople.

Nelson, so the Irishman reasoned, would have swept northward along the Syrian coast, swung to the westward beneath the peninsula of Asia Minor, across the Ægean, stopping to ascertain if the armada had gone

northward to Constantinople. Finding they had not, he would probably keep on across the Adriatic. Calculating that by this time their water and provisions would be low, Macartney concluded that the English fleet would then have to run into some friendly port for the purpose of replenishing the stores and filling the casks.

What port would that be? Probably not Naples, for that would involve an unnecessary detour and delay. It could only be Syracuse. They would be certain that Bonaparte was not in the western Mediterranean. Nelson would undoubtedly divine at last that he had passed ahead of the French armada, that when he thought it was before him it must have been behind him; and, under such circumstances, he would come back to his original idea that Egypt was their destination. To Egypt he would return by the straightest possible way.

No one knew the Mediterranean better than Macartney. He was able accurately enough to forecast the probable rate of speed at which the ships would have covered the distance. He knew what the weather conditions would be at that season of the year, and what the fleet could do. He knew that Nelson would drive the ships to the last limit. He knew about how long it would take them to get water and provisions at Syracuse. He had the map of the Mediterranean in his head, and he could even lay out the course which the fleet would pursue in returning to Alexandria.

His reasoning was brilliantly clever. It showed the quality of the man, for to have a mind that worked like

that of Nelson was in that particular to parallel him. Having settled this problem, then, it only remained for him to place the cutter where he could intercept the English fleet. The wind was unfavorable to him, as it blew steadily from the general direction of the northwest. He was forced to beat against it. When he got in what he conceived to be the course of the fleet, he tacked to and fro across an imaginary line traced from Syracuse to Alexandria.

The anxiety with which he scanned the horizon for the lift of a sail can scarcely be imagined. Through worthy Captain Schneider he communicated his hopes and plans to the Arabs of the crew. These men, who hated the French with the deadly, bitter hatred of the conquered, entered into the spirit of Macartney's search. Day and night there was a man at the masthead, with the only glass the boat possessed, sweeping the sea in front and on either side of them. Most of the time Macartney occupied that position himself. When tired nature forced him to give way and take a little rest, volunteers were always anxious to relieve him.

Four days sped away and they saw nothing. On the 29th of July, about quarter to nine at night, the cutter being upon the starboard tack, heading southwest, Macartney, who was aloft, thought he saw, as the boat rose on a sea, a glimmer of light far to windward of him. He brought his glass to bear upon it, but in the darkness he could distinguish nothing. He stared at it for a while, until presently another light swung into view and then a third.

Some intuition told him that it was the fleet of Nelson. To bring the boat about on the other tack was the work of a few moments. The wind was blowing heavily, and every sail that the cutter could spread was at once set. She ripped through the tumultuous sea at a great pace, but the lights were far away when they had been sighted, and, having the wind free, the vessels that bore them were going ahead at a very rapid rate. Unfortunately, as it turned out, Macartney had seen only the lights of the three rearmost ships of the English fleet. In spite of all he could do he realized that he could not overhaul them.

It was maddening!

There was a small cannon in the cutter, a six-pound gun. It was loaded and fired several times, but with the wind blowing away from the fleet it was evident that it was not heard. As the cutter sat low in the water, neither could the flash of the gun be seen. They had come near enough now to count half a dozen lights, and Macartney was certain that it was the English fleet. No other ships could be there, sailing in that order, in that number, and heading that way. The French had stripped their ports of all the ships available for the armada. The line of lights could belong to nothing but the ships of Nelson.

And now he was unable to overhaul them! He came to a desperate resolution. Staking all on the accuracy of his guess, he determined to resort to the only means at command for attracting the attention of the moving fleet. The idea which had sprung into his mind in-

volved the destruction of the cutter. It was perilous, in that, if by any chance the ships ahead of him did not belong to the fleet of Nelson, he would of course be captured, since he would be without power to run away ; or if no attention was paid in spite of his expedient, the result would be that they would be left alone on the sea in a small boat, the only one the cutter possessed, which was scarcely large enough to hold them all.

Macartney had determined to resort to the desperate expedient of firing the cutter. He promised Captain Schneider, to whom he made known his name and rank and the circumstances under which he had been captured and had escaped, that he should be reimbursed for the destruction of his boat, even if Macartney had to pay him out of his own private funds. By dint of hard argument and moving appeal the captain at last reluctantly consented. Like the Arabs, he too hated the French. So soon as Schneider had agreed a fire was kindled forward of the mast. The cutter's head was laid away from the wind, so that the flame and smoke should not be carried aft, the one boat was provisioned and launched, and then all hands crowded into the cockpit and waited.

It required but a short time for the fire to get a firm hold upon the dry timbers of the little vessel, and in a few moments a mass of flame was roaring up into the sky, fanned by the fierce wind. A magnificent signal-torch indeed ! Certainly the ships ahead, whose lights could be but faintly distinguished now, could not fail to see that tower of fire.

A fire at sea is the most terrible catastrophe that can happen to a ship. The commonest humanity dictates that whenever an unusual light is seen at night, or a pillar of smoke by day, by a ship, she should immediately repair to it for the purpose of giving succor. The rearmost ship of Nelson's squadron happened to be the *Culloden*, Captain Thomas Troubridge. She was one of the most efficient vessels of that marvellous group. In fighting capacity she led them all. Unfortunately, however, she was a slow sailer, and, lagging behind in spite of the seamanship of her commander, she usually brought up the rear of the line.

The light from the burning cutter was seen by the fleet. Signals were made to the *Culloden*, which was nearest to it, to run down and examine it, while the course of the fleet was slightly altered so that if anything untoward happened they would be at hand to support the *Culloden*. It seemed hours to Macartney and the people on that blazing boat before the black bows of the huge liner came shoving out of the darkness close aboard. Just as she drew near them the moor rose and mingled its light with that cast by the fire. So furiously had the cutter burned that her crew had been driven to the boat, which still remained attached to the blazing hulk. The *Culloden*, beautifully handled, rounded to a half cable's length to windward of the cutter and hailed. With what joy Macartney recognized an English voice can easily be imagined.

"Cutter ahoy!" rang over the water. "What boat is that?"

"It's Macartney of the *Inconstant* with news for Admiral Nelson!"

"Ay, ay. Shall we send a boat for you?"

"No. We're coming aboard."

In a few moments the Arabs brought the cutter's boat to the starboard gangway of the *Culloden*. Macartney leaped up the battens like a boy. Troubridge himself stood on the deck and eagerly grasped him by the hand. The two were old shipmates and old friends.

"Macartney!" he cried, "Great God, how did you get here? Where is the *Inconstant?* Do you know anything about the French?"

The last question was the most important.

"The French are in Aboukir Bay."

"How many?"

"Thirteen sail-of-the-line."

"Praised be God!" exclaimed Troubridge. "Are there any more of you?" he added, looking at the Arabs and Schneider, who had come on deck.

"That's all."

"And the cutter?"

"She's doomed."

"Mr. Griffiths, fill away," said Troubridge to the officer of the watch. "Send me the signal officer, sir. Look after these men," he continued, nodding toward the crew of the cutter. "Now, Macartney." He slipped his arm within that of the Irishman and led him aft.

"Where's the *Inconstant?*"

"We were taken on the 28th of June, off Malta, by the French fleet. The *Inconstant* was fought until she sank. I was wounded."

"By heavens, Macartney, Nelson is almost crazy for news! He would have given his soul for frigates. If we had had them, we would have caught the French long since."

"I know," said Macartney. "I understand."

"You sent for me, sir?" said the midshipman whose duty was the making and answering of signals.

"Yes, Mr. Winters. I want you to signal the flagship that the French are in Aboukir Bay."

"Very good, sir."

"Now tell me," said Troubridge. "You were captured?"

"Yes. Kept prisoner on *Le Tonnant*, one of the finest 80's I have ever seen."

"They build fine ships and we take them. Heave ahead."

"I escaped five days ago in yonder cutter. I reasoned that Nelson would sweep round Syria and Asia Minor and perhaps run into Syracuse for water; that you would leave about the 26th of July —"

"It was the 25th. You guessed well!"

"Then I thought you would take the back track once more for Alexandria."

"Your reasoning was exactly right," answered Troubridge. "It's wonderful! That's just what we did. You are only one day out of your reckoning."

"Good!" said Macartney. "I kept the cutter

making short tacks over what I believed would be your course and to-night about two bells I saw your lights. I was heading southwest on the starboard tack then, and although we came about at once and I cracked on everything I had, I saw it would be impossible to overhaul you. We banged away with a six pounder, but you didn't hear us."

"By Jove, did you set her on fire on a chance?"

"I did."

"Splendidly done!"

"Signal from the flagship, sir," said Mr. Winters. "The admiral directs you to send a boat aboard."

"He will have to wait for me, then," said Troubridge. "This old tub couldn't catch a crab!"

"I think the flagship's hove to, sir, from the lay of her lights," answered the midshipman.

"A glass!" cried Troubridge, reaching out his hand. "Ay, she's waiting for us. We'll be alongside in a few moments. What a relief this will be to Nelson!"

It was not long before the *Culloden*, lumbering through the seas in the moonlight, for the moon was now well clear of the horizon, rounded to about half a cable's length to leeward of the *Vanguard*, which Macartney easily recognized from her stumpy jury foremast. Nelson had never been able to take the time necessary to have permanent repairs made to the *Vanguard*, and she was just as she had been patched up after the storm in the Gulf of Lyons. As the great main-yard of the *Culloden* was swung and she came to a pause, a little figure, seen dimly in the moonlight,

standing by the lee rail of the poop of the *Vanguard*, shouted in a voice of astonishing power.

"Troubridge!"

"Ay, ay, Sir Horatio."

"Did you say the French were in Aboukir?"

"Yes, sir."

"How did you find out?"

"Macartney says so."

"Who?"

"Macartney!" shouted Troubridge.

"Where is he?"

"Here on board."

"Thank God!" cried Nelson.

In an instant both ships rang with cheers.

"Macartney!" called out the admiral.

"Yes, Admiral," answered the Irishman.

"I am glad to see you. The news is magnificent! Are you well?"

"Perfectly, sir."

"Come aboard the *Vanguard* immediately. Troubridge, send him over."

"I would like to keep you with me," smiled Troubridge, directing a boat to be called away, "but of course Sir Horatio would never be happy until he had pumped you dry of all your tidings."

"Thank you, Troubridge. Will you have these Arabs and the Dutchman sent over also? I owe them much."

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE *VANGUARD* GETS THE NEWS

In a few moments Macartney stepped once more upon the deck of the *Vanguard*. Like Troubridge, Nelson was waiting for him at the gangway. It was a different Nelson from the captain of the *Agamemnon* with whom we began this story. Five years had passed over his head, and he looked as if he had gone through the vicissitudes of twenty. His right sleeve, empty of an arm, was pinned to the breast of his coat. In the place of his right eye there was an empty socket. He was thinner, paler, more fragile than ever, a very whiff of a man. He looked as if the wind of a cannon shot might blow him away. He was so nervous and so excitable that he could not stand still. In the face of his officers and the ship's company, for many of the men below had left their hammocks at the sound of the cheering and had come on deck and joined the watch, Nelson threw his arm round his beloved subordinate and fairly hugged him.

"What's this news you bring?" he cried, scarcely giving Macartney time to breathe. "The French, you say —"

"Are in Aboukir, Sir Horatio."

"I was there a month ago."

"Yes, you got there two days ahead of them."

"What a misfortune!"

"Never mind, Admiral, you will not be too late as it is."

"How many sail?"

"Thirteen of the line."

"Their rating?"

"One of 120, three 80's, and nine 74's."

"And we have thirteen 74's and a fifty-gun ship. It's a beautiful match, with the odds heavily in their favor. Just what we want. How did you leave them?"

"At anchor in line ahead when I took my departure. *L' Orient*, with Brueys' flag, the three decker, you know, sir, with two of the 80's supporting fore and aft, at the centre. They lie about half a cable's length apart. The line, which is slightly convex, runs, roughly speaking, from north to south for about a mile and a half."

"Are they moored? Have they springs on their cables?"

"They hadn't when I left, sir. They were riding to a single anchor. They may not be there now, however."

"What!"

"It was said in the fleet that they were going to Corfu or Malta, or perhaps to haul into Alexandria if they could."

"My God! If they should not be there I think it would kill me!" said Nelson. "Macartney, you cannot know what this month has been to me."

He passed his hand over his brow and brushed back that great shock of hair already graying from illness and anxiety.

"No one can know what I have suffered! Not a frigate, not a scout boat of any kind, except that little brig yonder which Hardy has. I prayed for light ships. 'Want of frigates,' if I should die, would be found written on my heart. Where were you? Where's the *Inconstant*, by the way?"

Not until he had mastered every detail of the French position had he thought to inquire as to Macartney's personal affairs, or even as to the condition of his frigate.

"I lost the *Inconstant*, Admiral," said Macartney, sadly. "I would rather have lost my arm."

"I am sure it was from no fault of yours, Sir Robert," said Nelson, kindly.

"Thank you, sir. Just as we passed Malta on the 20th of June we ran into the French fleet on a foggy, misty, rainy night. They were sailing very irregularly. I caught sight of the lights of one division and edged down toward them to make sure. When I found out what they were I bore up and tried to get away, and in the rain and darkness ran slap into another division. One of the ships ran us down and stove in our larboard side to the water's edge. I cut loose with the batteries and did the best I could, but even the *Inconstant* was no match for half a dozen French frigates with a liner atop. I was laid out by a shot through the shoulder —"

"Are you all right now?" interrupted Nelson again.

"Yes, Sir Horatio," said Macartney. "My arm is a little stiff and pains me at times, but I am practically a well man."

"That's good. Go on!"

"I was taken aboard *Le Tonnant*, a magnificent eighty-gun ship, the finest ship-of-the-line I ever saw."

"If they could only fight ships as they build them, there might be some excitement when we met," said Nelson, smiling.

"Ay, ay, sir. Well, I escaped from *Le Tonnant*."

"How?"

"Her captain is that same Jean Garron that led the attack upon that old tower from which we rescued the Marquis de Vaudémont."

"And his granddaughter?" added Nelson, smiling.

"Yes, of course, five years ago. You remember it, sir?"

"Perfectly."

"They happened to be prisoners on the ship, too—"

"Ah!"

"They had nothing to do with my escape, however, for so far as I am concerned it was made very easy for me."

"How was that?"

"Garron is an infernal scoundrel! He agreed to surrender *Le Tonnant* to you so soon as you came in sight, to use his influence to keep the French where they were—in short, to lend you every possible aid."

"Why did he offer to do that?"

"I think he does not stand well with the present French authorities, sir, and I presume he knew you were going to catch the French anyway and wanted to get in on the winning side."

"Umph!" said Nelson.

"However," said Macartney, "I wouldn't count on his help."

"Why not?"

"I rather think he will be a dead man before you get to Aboukir."

"Why?"

Thereupon Macartney related to his admiral the whole story of the proposed visit of the marquis and his granddaughter to Bonaparte with the incriminating paper Garron had signed.

"What do you think the French general will do to the marquis?" queried Nelson, as the tale was unfolded.

"I don't know. I hope he will treat him well. Meanwhile, you can imagine how anxious I am to get back."

"I can indeed," said the admiral, kindly. "Tell me — if I may ask a personal question — how go your own affairs?"

"Well indeed, Admiral, but for the loss of the frigate."

"Never mind that. You have brought me the information I wanted. It is worth a dozen frigates. Has fortune smiled upon your suit for the hand of the French girl?"

"Yes."

"I hate a Frenchman as I do the devil," said Nelson. "I have but three principles in life — obey orders, honor the King, and damn the French. But that marquis seemed rather a good sort; he knows a ship and can fight, certainly. And his granddaughter — well, I can understand your feelings. By the way, how did your cutter get on fire?"

"I kindled the fire myself."

"Well, by Jove!" whistled Nelson. "If that wasn't an idea!"

"I was morally certain that it was the English fleet ahead of me and that was the only way to attract you. That reminds me, sir. I promised Schneider and those men in the cutter that you would reimburse them for the value of their boat."

"Certainly. Perhaps I can do better. *La Mutine* overhauled a French gunboat yesterday. I judge she's a much better boat in every way than the cutter. I will turn the prize over to your friend Schneider in the morning, with a sufficient sum of money, which I am sure will give satisfaction. The news you have brought me is worth more than I can estimate. By the way, is he a pilot for Aboukir?"

"No, I am sorry to say. He's an up-the-Nile German trader, who knows little or nothing about the bay."

"Well, I should hesitate to trust his Majesty's ships to a Dutchman, anyway. We'll let him go in the morning."

"Have you a chart of the bay, Sir Horatio?"

"None."

"I have a rough map given me by Garron, but as to the depth of water or anything of that kind, of course, I cannot say."

"Do you think there will be room enough for us to pass around the head or get to the rear of the French line?"

"I do not know what the depth of the water will be, Admiral, as I said."

"Where there is room for a French ship to swing, there is room for an English ship to pass. Is it not so?"

"Quite so, Admiral."

"Now," said Nelson, noticing the look of utter weariness on the face of Macartney, "you are dead beat out, aren't you? Of course you will be my guest until I can do something for you in some way. Go into that cabin there. We'll talk over everything in the morning. No, not a word! Orders!"

"Good night, Admiral," said Macartney, smiling and turning away.

"Good night, old friend," said Nelson, patting him on the shoulder. "You have made me the happiest of men with your news. Good night, God bless you!"

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE BAND OF BROTHERS

THE next day, so soon as morning quarters and inspection were over, the captains of the fleet were summoned to the flagship. The good news brought by Macartney, which they had already learned from the signals between the *Vanguard* and the *Culloden* during the night, was communicated to them in detail. All of them the Irishman knew; with most of them he had sailed. They crowded around him, shaking him by the hand, slapping him upon the back in their exuberant joy at seeing him and the good tidings he had brought.

They were indeed a rare and unusual set of men. There was Foley of the *Goliath*, a man in whose blood mingled Welsh and Irish strains, a splendid and daring seaman, about to distinguish himself in the coming battle more highly than any of the assembled captains. By his side was Saumarez of the *Orion*, who needed only a rochet and chimere and the long sleeves of a bishop to pass for a prelate, but who was as gallant in soul as he was ecclesiastical in appearance. There, too, was burly Ben Hallowell, born in Canada, commanding the *Swiftsure*, both ship and captain sturdy and strong and ready for any emergency. Close by Nelson were Louis of the *Minotaur*, who was to be publicly thanked for

his magnificent support of his admiral in the battle; Peyton of the *Defence*, stout man and stout ship; and Ball of the *Alexander*, cool, calm, philosophical, devoted, who had already saved the *Vanguard* and won Nelson's undying affection.

The famous Hood family, which furnished four great seamen to the English Navy, was represented by Captain Samuel of the *Zealous*, a worthy member of the group. America's contribution was Captain Ralph Willett Miller, the son of a New York Tory, a prime seaman and gallant officer, who commanded the *Theseus*. Captain Westcott of the *Majestic* was another rare character. The son of a baker in Devon, he had entered the Navy as a cabin boy and had won his way to his high rank by sheer merit alone.

The list was completed by fighting Ned Berry of the *Vanguard*, the flagship; daring and skilful Thompson of the *Leander;* steady-going Gould of the *Audacious;* the venturesome Darby of the *Bellerophon;* Hardy of the *Mutine*, the youngest of the band; and Troubridge of the *Culloden*, Nelson's dearest friend, his *nonpareil!*

These were the men whom Nelson justly styled his "Band of Brothers." The youngest was twenty-nine, the oldest forty. Yet their experience in war had been great indeed. They had fought all over the world. Not a general action had taken place in twenty-five years in which some of them, sometimes several of them, had not participated.

Here was no body of roistering sailors. In manners and education they were men of mark. Saumarez and

Ball were men of deep and modest piety. Troubridge, Miller, and Hardy were men of the most refined honor. Indeed, it is invidious to particularize. They were all men of unusual qualities, and such a set of seamen and fighters probably never took a fleet into action.

Of the fourteen, thirteen survived the ensuing battle. All of them who lived long enough greatly distinguished themselves in the service of their country. One was eventually made a peer of the realm, four were created baronets and Knights of the Bath, four received the Order of the Bath, three others obtained baronetcies, and of the two remaining, both died too soon to have received similar rewards which would undoubtedly have fallen to them. Under such a band of captains their admiral was to take his fleet to battle. No wonder that success awaited them.

Whenever the weather permitted throughout the long chase of the French, they had been summoned to the *Vanguard*. Every possible contingency which might arise had been discussed between them over and over again. Nelson had given them information, which was impregnated in the minds of every one of those men, of his plans and the spirit in which they were to be carried out. They not only knew what to do, but, what was more important, they knew what Nelson would have them do under whatever circumstances. He had shaped and moulded them without destroying their individuality. He had forged them, welded them into a mighty and intelligent weapon to his hand. There was no necessity, therefore, for any further

conference, and this last meeting was simply to put his captains in possession of such information as Macartney had brought.

Nor did Nelson detain them long. Time was too valuable to waste in conversation. In a few moments the boats of the several captains were pulling away to their respective ships. As they reached them the yards were swung and the vessels gathered way on the last day of their long and persistent chase of the enemy.

On the morning of the 1st of August, the day being bright and beautiful, they were off the harbor of Alexandria. Nelson detached the *Swiftsure* and *Alexander*, which were to leeward of the main fleet, and ordered them to run down toward the harbor to ascertain if the French were in there, while with the rest of the fleet he held his course to the eastward for the Bay of Aboukir. At ten o'clock in the morning the two ships mentioned had drawn near enough to the Pharos to get a view of the harbor. They signalled that there were no ships save transports and a few small war vessels in Alexandria. By this time the fleet had drawn some eight or nine miles ahead of them. The ships were carrying sail hard and going rapidly before the fresh northwest breeze.

About three o'clock in the afternoon a set of signals was run up to the masthead of the *Goliath*, but owing to the haste with which they had been bent on, the toggles of the flags were improperly secured and the signal could not be read. Before it could be repeated, however, the *Zealous*, which was practically running a

neck and neck race with the *Goliath* for the honor of leading the fleet, flung her signals to the wind, and the watchers on the ships read the news that the French fleet was in Aboukir.

Across the low, sandy spit which forms the west side of the Bay of Aboukir lookouts on the two leading ships had caught a glimpse of the tall spars of the vessels of the French swinging quietly at their anchors. They were run down at last! The quarry they had so furiously pursued was there before them! There was no useless haste about the movements of Nelson now. The fleet bore up until it had passed the promontory of Aboukir and had drawn abreast of a little island called by the French L'Isle Bequières, upon which Brueys had established a battery of four twelve pounders and two thirteen-inch mortars. The breeze was so strong that they could not carry their topgallant sails on the wind.

It was known that the water in Aboukir Bay was very shoal, and it was evident that this shallow water extended a long distance to the eastward of the little island. Therefore the English ships gave it a wide berth after they weathered it before they swung to the southward. On every vessel leadsmen in the chains kept the commanders informed of the state of the water. It was not until five o'clock that they deemed it safe to head direct for the French fleet in line parallel to the shore. Ship after ship swung round past the island, and in a pell-mell huddle — for no attempt had been made to preserve any especial order during the last few hours of the chase — they squared

away for the French line, setting their topgallant sails as they did so. Nelson, however, did not intend that the attack should be delivered in the confusion in which the varying rates of speed had temporarily thrown the several ships of the fleet.

Presently the signal "Prepare for battle!" was given. Instantly could be heard the rattle of drums from ship to ship calling the men to their quarters. In a few moments this signal was followed by another. Everybody in the fleet knew what the signal would be. Everybody was ready to obey it. The order was to form line ahead and astern of the *Vanguard* as most convenient.

The *Goliath* and *Zealous* were racing for the lead. Foley was quicker than Hood. The instant the watchers on the poop saw the black balls of the rolled-up flags travelling toward the masthead of the *Vanguard*, without waiting for the stops to be broken, Foley, who had everything in readiness, actually flung out his studding sails and swept to the head of the line, wresting by his adroit seamanship the place from the gallant and scarcely less ready Hood.

Confusion resolved itself into order with astonishing quickness. The noble ships swung into line with a celerity and accuracy that amazed the beholders. The *Vanguard* was well up with the advance, but Nelson very properly hove to the flagship and allowed the *Orion*, the *Audacious*, and the *Theseus* to precede him, thus taking his position in the centre of the line with the *Vanguard*, closely followed by the *Minotaur*, the

Defence, the *Bellerophon*, and the *Majestic*. Far behind the fleet came the lumbering *Culloden*, and farther away along the coast came the *Swiftsure* and the *Alexander*. Tailing after the *Majestic* was the *Leander*, which really had no business at all in the line of battle. If Nelson had not been so intent upon the French ahead of him, perhaps he might have ordered her out. And that would have broken the heart of Thompson, and would have deprived him of the chance to make a most telling contribution to the winning of the ensuing battle.

So soon as the English line was formed and the men sent to their stations, there was nothing to do but wait. As silent as death angels the great black-hulled ships of the English fleet swept down upon the party-colored line of their ancient enemy.

At two o'clock that afternoon a man on the cross-trees of *L'Heureux* — a sailor engaged in overhauling some of the rigging — happened to cast his eyes over the sand-bank to the westward. What was his astonishment to see outlined against the sloping sun the topsails of a fleet of ships! He reported his discovery to the deck at once, and in a few moments the rigging and mastheads of the French fleet swarmed with men scanning the strangers.

It was immediately realized that the twelve sail approaching them, for the *Swiftsure* and *Alexander* were not in sight at the time, composed the fleet of Admiral Nelson. That the French were surprised by their arrival is to put it mildly. Brueys seemed to have entertained the fatuous belief that the English were afraid

of him ! He knew very well that in the matter of size and strength his fleet greatly overmatched Nelson's. *L'Orient* was considered more than capable of taking care of two 74's. The three 80's were estimated as a heavy overmatch for five 74's. This calculation would leave him with nine 74's as against four of the same and one 50 to the English, counting their number as twelve; or seven, counting their number as fourteen. The odds were so overwhelmingly in his favor that he was sure that under no circumstances would Nelson dare to assume the offensive, especially as the French lookouts only counted twelve sail-of-the-line. Brueys was as brave as a lion and as stupid as he was brave.

The Bay of Aboukir is shaped like a fish-hook, Bequières Island, now called Nelson's Island, being the point of the barb. Inside this barb the French ships were anchored in a line forming a very obtuse angle, *L'Orient* at the apex. They were distant from one another about four hundred feet. Bonaparte's emphatic words concerning the possibility of his flanks being turned had roused Brueys into some sort of sluggish action. He had erected the battery on Bequières Island and had massed some of his gunboats and bomb ketches in the shallow water inside his van ship, *Le Guerrier*.

As has been said, the water of the Bay of Aboukir is very shoal, and the French line was of necessity formed about three miles from the shore in between five and six fathoms of water. About a thousand feet inside the line four heavy frigates had been stationed. Unfor-

tunately for the French, the best and most efficient ships — outside the powerful trio which formed the centre, *L' Orient*, 120, *Le Franklin*, 80, just ahead of her, and *Le Tonnant*, 80, right astern — had been placed in the rear division, with Admiral Villeneuve flying his flag on *Le Guillaume Tell*, another splendid eighty-gun ship.

When the English were discovered, large detachments from all the French ships were ashore filling water-casks. Signals were immediately made to recall these parties, and the captains of the French fleet were summoned aboard the flagship. There was division and indecision in the council that ensued. Brueys, singularly enough, in one of his conversations with Bonaparte which has been preserved, had pointed out the disadvantage of receiving an attack at anchor. Yet when the time came to put his remarks in practice he was in a painful state of uncertainty whether to remain where he was or get under way.

For one thing, he at first felt sure that the English would not engage. Then, as the *Alexander* and *Swiftsure* were seen, increasing the number of his enemies to fourteen, he began to have an idea that perhaps they might attack him. He therefore decided to get under way and go out to meet them. According to his orders the topgallant yards were crossed.

Then Brueys abandoned this idea and decided to wait for them at anchor, or at any rate to allow the night to pass before anything was done. Certainly the English would not be mad enough to enter an unknown harbor and attack a superior fleet, say in the

ratio of ten to seven, in a position of their own deliberate choice, in the dark !

It never seems to have occurred to Brueys, or to any one in the French fleet, unless it was to the Marquis de Vaudémont on *Le Tonnant*, that night and day were alike to Nelson, and that he would attack the French fleet as quickly in the dark as he would in daylight. Realizing at last that possibly Nelson might not wait until morning, Brueys dismissed his captains and bade them prepare for battle ; to bind the fleet together by running a heavy hawser from ship to ship so that no ship could break through the line ; and to get out another anchor to the southeastward, with springs upon the cable, so as to enable the several ships to be hauled to windward, thus bringing their broadsides to bear in different directions, as might be required should the English attack.

It was not until after five o'clock in the evening, when the excited French saw the masterly manœuvring by which the English formed line out of apparently hopeless confusion, that Brueys became convinced that he had a fight upon his hands, which would begin just as soon as the English guns bore. How that attack would be delivered, and on what part of the line it would fall, he had absolutely no means of ascertaining.

He was caught ! There was nothing now to do but await the battle and then fight as bravely as possible. A few of the ships seem to have obeyed his orders to get out another anchor and bend springs upon their

cables. Most of them did not. None of them thought, or at least not any of them attempted, to pass the connecting hawser from ship to ship. Brueys was a man of ideas which he never carried out. He had originally determined, when he anchored at Aboukir, to fasten the vessels together by an iron cable, but it had not been done, and then the rope substitute which he wished to make use of at the last moment was never passed.

There was something alarming in the swift, silent approach of the black English fleet. It was the custom of that day for each captain to paint his ship in accordance with his fancy. The French ships were so painted. In the mass they looked like a rainbow. Nelson instituted that style of painting his ships as black as death which did service practically in all navies until the slate grays of the modern steel battle ship came into vogue. Where the two lines of ports came there were livid, yellow streaks, broken by the black openings of the gun ports and the covering port-shutters, the only bits of color about the ships — "Nelson's checker-boards," the sailors facetiously called them.

The sun was low in the horizon by the time the first ship had drawn within range. The western sky, slightly clouded, was a magnificent blaze of gold and color. The *Goliath* was coming on as swiftly and as silently as a shooting star. She was pointing straight for the head of the French line. What did she intend?

If Nelson would only lay his ships broadside to

broadside of the French fleet all the way down the line, Brueys felt confident that he could at least stand him off in a drawn battle. An ordinary admiral would have done this. Brueys would have done it himself, and being an ordinary admiral he had no way of fathoming the purpose of an extraordinary admiral like Nelson.

Neither he nor any one, save a certain old officer of the ancient French Navy quietly walking up and down the poop-deck of *Le Tonnant*, his granddaughter upon his arm, his faithful Brébœuf by his side, realized that what Brueys anticipated would certainly not be the thing that would happen. The admiral's view was that of a spectator. He had no duties to claim his attention, no interest in any particular ship. Dupetit-Thouars, who had also been educated in the school of de Suffren, might have suspected something, had he not been busily engaged in preparing his ship for action.

Expecting, as did their admiral, to be fought on the starboard side, the French captains, instead of casting overboard all unnecessary impediments, including the spare cabins which had been built upon every one of the liners to accommodate the army officers, piled the dunnage up in great heaps on the larboard side between the guns. Brueys' fleet was somewhat short-handed, but there were over a thousand sailors on the four frigates lying inboard of his line, who were in no danger from battle ships so long as they kept quiet and attended to their own business. The etiquette of

war in that day kept battle ships from firing upon frigates unless the frigate provoked an attack by joining in the battle. Brueys as a final measure directed that the bulk of their crews should be sent to reënforce his ships-of-the-line.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE GRAPPLE OF THE LEVIATHANS

A FEW minutes after six o'clock flags were broken out from the mastheads of the English ships. Nelson was only a rear-admiral of the Blue, but he had a peculiar affection for the white flag, and, by his order, among the ensigns displayed upon the British ships was the white ensign of a rear-admiral of the White. This flag with its red cross of St. George would be distinguishable in the darkness and could by no chance be mistaken for the French tricolor. He had also ordered all his vessels, so soon as night fell, to string four lights horizontally from the mizzen peak. There was always danger that mistakes might be made, and Nelson felt that this would reduce danger to a minimum.

The *Goliath*, hard pushed by the *Zealous*, had barely maintained her place at the head of the line. Foley had clewed up his topgallant sails in preparation for battle, but, the *Zealous* forereaching him, he had been compelled to set them again.

His ship made a magnificent picture as, with her sails gleaming white against the red glow of the dying sun, she swept down toward the head of the French line. Foley himself stood on the poop-deck to leeward, being the point from which best to observe the enemy,

staring at the ships ahead of him. Although it was not yet dark, he could see the battle lanterns, which had been lighted in preparation for the coming battle, sparkling through the long lines of open ports with their black-throated guns, around which clustered the persistent and ancient enemies of England.

There was perfect silence throughout the ship, broken only by the uneasy groaning of the timbers and the creaking of yards and cordage under the pull of the great topsails, as she swiftly slipped through the heaving waves rolling over the shallow ocean floor. The deep voices of the leadsmen in the main chains on both sides of the ship, calling out the depth of the water in their rude but rhythmical chant, were the only sounds from human lips that could be heard as the mighty *Goliath* rushed at the enemy.

Everything was ready. It only remained for the battle to be joined. The water was shoaling rapidly. The keel of the *Goliath* was perilously near the sandy bottom already. The time for a momentous decision had arrived. As Foley stared at the bows of the first French ship, the mighty *Guerrier*, something more than two hundred yards ahead of him, his keen eye detected a buoy floating far forward of her bows. The French ship was riding to a long scope, and that buoy marked the position of her anchor. There was no order as to just what he should do with his ship, but Nelson's words in one of the conversations they had had on the *Vanguard* during the cruise flashed into his mind. "Where

there is room for a French ship to swing, there is room for an English ship to pass," and to anchor, too!

He would do it! Instead of rounding to, on the outside of the French line, he would cut across the bows of the anchored ship and bring up on the other side. Amazing and portentous resolution! He risked his ship for the gain that would come.

Foley had been with Rodney at the Battle of the Saints, when the old man broke through the French lines. He learned then that it was the bad habit of the French to pile their dunnage on the disengaged side. He could do more damage and receive less hurt there than to windward. Other ships might follow his example; others still might drop along the outer side of the French line. He saw the coming battle in his mind as it were a picture. That great line of French ships would be caught between two fires and crushed to destruction.

"I intend to throw my fleet upon the French van and centre," Nelson had said.

Whether it would be better to station two British ships, one off the bow and the other off the quarter of each French ship, both on the same side, or whether it would be better to double on the French line, was a question. Foley decided quickly, and decided correctly, that doubling was the proper move.

It was twenty minutes after six now. A burst of flame and smoke from *Le Guerrier*, another from her next astern, *Le Conquérant*, and the battle was joined.

"Call the men from the chains!" said the English

captain, quickly. They were of no use to him now, he had decided. "Man the larboard battery! Hands by the tops'l and t'gallant sheets and halyards! Lead along the clew-lines! Steady!"

There was a little confusion, soon settled, as the men shifted to the larboard batteries and as the sail trimmers took their appointed stations. The French broadside, badly aimed, had done little or no damage to the English ships. Into the smoke the *Goliath* drove with headlong speed. Almost abreast of her and a little to windward came the *Zealous*. Foley glanced aft, and there, keeping magnificent order, swarmed the war monsters of England. He had only time for a single look.

The guns of *Le Guerrier* were speaking again. Shot began to come aboard. Men fell here and there. The crash of splintered timbers was heard above the roar of the discharge. The men looked at their captain. Did he intend to run down *Le Guerrier*, now close aboard? But no. He leaned over and spoke to the man at the helm. Slowly the spokes of the wheel revolved. The great ship swung up to the wind slightly. Another moment and her bowsprit drew across the headbooms of *Le Guerrier*. The battery on Bequières Island was sputtering fire. It was too far away to do much damage. No one paid any attention to it.

Hood, in the *Zealous*, close behind the *Goliath*, saw Foley's astonishing manœuvre. Was the *Goliath* going to pass athwart the hawse of the French fleet? Expecting every moment to take ground, yet holding on

with the same indomitable determination that marked Foley, Hood came following after with his noble ship. Now the *Goliath* was fairly abreast *Le Guerrier*. Every gun on the English ship bore upon the French vessel. Hollowing his hand, Foley shouted out a fierce command. Instantly the whole side of the *Goliath* burst into flame. At pistol-shot distance every gun, double or triple shotted, swept *Le Guerrier* with a besom of destruction.

"Settle away sheets and halyards!" roared Foley. "Clew up and clew down! Hard up with the helm! Load, and fire! Give it to them, men!"

At once the sails upon the yard-arms disappeared as if by magic. In the excitement they were clewed up to the yards, which were hauled down to the caps, in less time than it takes to tell it.

"Let go the starboard anchor!" shouted Foley.

By Nelson's orders every ship had fastened a cable around the mizzenmast, carried it through a stern port, and thence outside the ship forward, where it was bent to one of the bower anchors. Nelson directed his ships to anchor by the stern. This precaution would prevent them from swinging under fire as they would have done coming down the wind if they had anchored by the bows, thus giving the French a chance to rake them. Anchored by the stern, they could go ahead simply by veering cables, and as the wind would be aft it would give them immediate control of their ships in case it became necessary to make sail.

Something was wrong with the anchor, however, and

it did not drop until the *Goliath* had swept past the antagonist which she had elected to fight and had dropped down to the larboard quarter of *Le Conquérant* and the larboard bow of *Le Spartiate*. Right on the heels of the *Goliath* came the *Zealous*. With nice seamanship Hood dropped his anchor where Foley had intended to stop, just off the larboard bow of *Le Guerrier*.

Hard after the *Zealous* came the *Orion*. Taking a wider sweep, Saumarez threw his ship across the bows of *Le Guerrier*, raking her for the third time as he passed; then he crossed the stern of the *Zealous* and ran swiftly down outside of the *Goliath*, now fiercely engaged, her guns in one continuous roar from the rapidity with which she was fought.

Inboard of the French line lay the first of the frigates, *Le Sérieuse*, a forty-gun ship. As the *Orion* came sweeping along, the frigate foolishly opened fire upon her. To her first broadside Saumarez paid no attention, although Barker, his first lieutenant, besought him for permission to return it.

"No," said the captain, "perhaps she will come nearer."

Sure enough, *Le Sérieuse* veered cable and again opened fire on the *Orion*. With a sudden sweep of the helm Saumarez swung his great ship out toward the frigate. She had invited her own doom. At close range, within the length of a cable, one mighty broadside was hurled upon her. She was dismasted, her guns dismounted, and in five minutes she sank, fortu-

nately for her crew drifting on the sands as she did so. The *Orion* then anchored abreast the fifth French ship, *Le Peuple Souverain.*

After the *Orion* came the *Audacious.* Gould did not try to round the French van ship. He boldly thrust his vessel in between *Le Guerrier* and *Le Conquérant*, raking *Le Guerrier* with his starboard battery and *Le Conquérant* with his larboard guns as he did so. He came to anchor off the bow of *Le Conquérant*, and to her he clung, raking her with every shot.

Into the smoke of the battle the *Theseus* now plunged. Cool, calm, collected as any captain who ever fought, instead of going outside of the British ships engaged on the inner side of the French line, Miller, observing the French were firing high, calmly sailed the *Theseus* between the *Zealous* and *Le Guerrier*, so close to the latter that their yards almost touched, past the *Audacious* and *Le Conquérant*, between the *Goliath* and *Le Spartiate*, pouring shot and shell into each of the French in succession, while receiving little damage himself, and at last dropped his anchor by the side of *L'Aquilon* just abaft the *Orion.*

Hard on the wake of the *Theseus* surged the mighty *Vanguard.* The excitement of the past two months had completely departed from the little admiral. Ice is the only word to describe his coolness. Yet the accentuated pallor of his face and the fiery blaze of his eyes served to exhibit the magnificent exultance of the man as he watched the marvellous handling of his ships by their captains. A strong northerly wind carried

the smoke of the battle far down the lines, and every manœuvre was as plain and as easily to be understood as if he had been watching a game of chess. Never in the history of naval warfare was there so magnificent a spectacle as was presented that summer evening in the Bay of Aboukir.

Nelson, accompanied on one side by Berry, on the other by Macartney, slowly paced the deck of the *Vanguard*. As on every other ship, her men were at quarters. She was ready for action, and her crew thirsted for the moment when the attack was to be made.

"Look at Foley! See how he takes his ship to action as if the eyes of England were upon him, and would to God they were!" exclaimed Nelson, unconsciously quoting Jervis, as he leaned far over the weather rail and stared past the other ships of his van to see what the leading liner was about.

"He will be into the French ship," said Berry, quickly, "if he doesn't change his course!"

"His word, like that of Troubridge at St. Vincent will be 'Let the weakest fend off,' I fancy," said the admiral, smiling with stern pleasure at the recollection.

"What's he about, I wonder?" queried Macartney, joining the others and staring at the bulk of the great ship outlined blackly against the setting sun.

"We shall see in a second," answered Nelson. "If I guess rightly, he will cross the bows of the—"

"He springs his luff!" cried Berry, suddenly. "He bears up!"

"You're right! She's going inside!" answered Macartney. "She'll take ground, she'll take ground!"

"No," said Nelson, "what did I tell you? *Where there is room for a French ship to swing, there is room for an English ship to pass.* Magnificent! There goes her broadside. Well done, *Goliath!*"

An instant after, a terrific crash, as the English van ship let fly her larboard battery in the face of *Le Guerrier*, was heard above the irregular rattle of the French fire. The overwhelming sound told those seamen who clustered around the black guns on the lowest deck in the very vitals of the flagship that the first blow had been struck for England. A spontaneous cheer burst forth from the men on the *Vanguard.*

"There goes the *Zealous!*" cried Nelson. "Right in her track. Raked again! God! Yon French ship must be a slaughter pen! Where's Foley?"

"He's brought to abreast the third ship, sir," cried Macartney, pointing.

"Now it's the *Orion*, superbly handled like the rest!"

"Look at the *Audacious*, Sir Horatio! She's breaking through the line!"

"Ay, ay," said Nelson, "and there go both her broadsides at once! It's magnificent! Were there ever captains like mine, Macartney? Berry, 'twill be our turn soon. Take another look through the batteries. Let no man fire until the order is given!"

"Admiral," cried Macartney, who had happened to look to seaward, seizing Nelson by the arm as he spoke, "look yonder! The *Culloden!*"

"By heaven," exclaimed Nelson, "she's ashore! Poor Troubridge! He would give his soul to be here! Who's that with him?"

"The *Leander*. And *La Mutine*, I think."

"I pray God he can get off. For his sake, mark ye, Sir Robert, for his sake, not mine! The loss of the *Culloden* gives us the odds that I like. The greater the honor."

"The *Theseus* is passing between our ships and the French, sir."

"There's no better seaman nor fighter in the fleet than that daredevil American. God, what would Troubridge give to be here! Look yonder, Macartney! Did anything ever come on more gallantly than the *Minotaur* and the rest?"

"Splendid, Admiral, splendid!" cried Macartney. "It's a pity the *Swiftsure* and the *Alexander* are so far away."

"There will be plenty of chance for them to get into the fight before it is over," said Nelson. "This is but the beginning. Yet I'll wager that burly Ben Hallowell is fretting his life out. Poor Troubridge's mishap will serve one purpose. They will be sure to give the shoal a wide berth. Think you she can get off in time?"

"I believe not, Sir Horatio. See! The *Leander* has left her."

"I ought to order that boat out of the line, but — ah, well, it would break Thompson's heart. Poor Troubridge, poor Troubridge! I had rather lost my other arm than —"

"Sir Horatio," said Berry, "in two more minutes we shall be in action. What shall we do?"

"Bring to on the outside of the French line. The third ship yonder will be your mark. We'll double them, and, look ye, Berry, no firing until you have clewed up!"

Le Spartiate, the third ship-of-the-line, was already engaged with the *Goliath* and the *Theseus*, but as Nelson's flagship came swinging along in the growing twilight she let drive a broadside at her from her starboard guns. Berry paid no attention to that, and, born fighter that he was, he kept the *Vanguard* going ahead until she was almost aboard of her. He dropped anchor and brought to the ship at less than thirty yards' distance from her doomed opponent. Not a shot was fired until the yards had been settled away and the sails clewed up. Then the starboard broadside was poured into the devoted French ship.

Just ahead of *Le Spartiate* lay *l'Aquilon*, one of the best ships in the French fleet. She seems to have been the only one except *Le Tonnant* which had carried out the admiral's order and put a spring on her cable; for, as the *Vanguard* came to anchor, *L'Aquilon*, not yet completely engaged, since Miller in the *Theseus* was dividing his fire between that ship and *Le Spartiate*, sprung her stern to starboard and began to rake the *Vanguard*. For a moment Nelson's ship was in somewhat the position of the van of the French line, for he was being assailed by two ships of equal force to his own, one of which was partially raking him with every discharge.

"This is hot work, Sir Horatio," cried Macartney, above the roar of the battle.

"It is. But think what it must be on those French ships yonder."

"They are raking us with every broadside, Admiral," said Berry. "We can't stand this much longer."

"Thank God, here comes the *Minotaur!*" said Nelson, as the great black hulk of the largest ship in his fleet drew swiftly past the unengaged side of the *Vanguard*, gallant Louis standing on the rail waving his hat at Nelson. With beautiful seamanship, so soon as he cleared the *Vanguard*, Louis swung the *Minotaur* in ahead of her, forcing *L'Aquilon* back into the line and hotly engaging her. By this means he relieved Nelson.

It was six forty-five, just sunset, when the *Minotaur* opened on *L'Aquilon*. There was a gap between the *Minotaur* and the three remaining ships, the *Defence* leading, with the *Bellerophon* next, and the *Majestic* last, but all three close together. It was seven o'clock, therefore, before the *Defence* dropped anchor on the starboard side of *Le Peuple Souverain*, furiously engaged on the other side with the *Orion*.

A moment after, Darby, missing *Le Franklin* in his haste to get into action, shoved the *Bellerophon*, looking very small indeed against her antagonist's towering sides, close aboard *L'Orient*. With a roar like that of a thunder clap, the huge three-decker opened on the gallant 74. *Le Franklin*, next ahead of *L'Orient*, divided her broadsides between the *Defence*, the *Orion*, and the *Bellerophon*. Last of all the ships engaged in

the first part of the action came the *Majestic*. A good place for Westcott to have put his ship would have been between the *Defence* and the *Bellerophon*, opposite *Le Franklin*, but in the darkness, for the short twilight had faded, and in the confusion caused by the smoke, he missed that station and brought to squarely abreast the eighth French ship, *Le Tonnant*.

Dupetit-Thouars had been waiting with what patience he could for his particular opponent, and the *Majestic* was scarcely within range when he hurled a broadside into her. The two leviathans of war were soon engaged in a terrific grapple. The position of *Le Tonnant* was much better than that of any of the other French ships engaged, as she had only one enemy upon which to concentrate her fire.

The French van ships were suffering dreadfully. Shortly after seven o'clock a small boat came recklessly rowing down the line of fire to the *Vanguard* with the following letter from Gould of the *Audacious*:

"*Audacious*, 1st August, 1798.

"To Sir Horatio Nelson, K. B.

"Sir:—I have the satisfaction to tell you that the French ship *Le Conquérant* has struck to the *Audacious*, and I have her in possession. The slaughter on board her is *dreadful;* her captain is dying. We have but one killed, but a great many wounded. Our fore and mainmast are wounded, but I hope not very bad. They tell me the foremast is the worst. I give you joy. This is a glorious victory. I am, with the utmost respect, yours in haste,

"D. Gould."

Le Conquérant, literally cut to pieces, had been the first ship to surrender. Five minutes after she struck,

Le Peuple Souverain, smashed into a helpless wreck, parted her cable and drifted out of her place in the line. She did not bring to until opposite *L'Orient*. The *Orion* immediately veered cable and followed her, dividing her fire between the beaten ship and *Le Franklin*. Saumarez's example was followed by Peyton with the *Defence*.

Into the great gap left by the withdrawal of the ruined *Le Peuple Souverain* Thompson gallantly threw the little *Leander*. He anchored his ship by the head and stern directly athwart the hawse of *Le Franklin*, and, in a position in which no gun of hers could touch him, raked her again and again.

From a position of comparative security, therefore, *Le Franklin* was suddenly the most sorely beset of the fleet. Rear-admiral Blanquet du Chayla, upon whom the immediate command devolved on account of the serious wounding of Captain Gilet, fought his noble vessel with unparalleled obstinacy and courage. The great eighty-gun ship blazed and roared like an active volcano.

Meanwhile, urged to the last limit by their impatient and ardent captains, the *Swiftsure* and *Alexander* came hurrying through the gloom of the night toward the fire-punctured, smoke-covered line. Hallowell was in the lead. In the darkness he saw looming close aboard him the shattered dismasted hulk of a ship. He was about to fire into it, but concluded to hail before doing so. It was well that he did, for he found that it was the *Bellerophon* going out of action.

For one hour Darby had stood the brunt of *L'Orient's* overwhelming fire, and now with every stick cut out of her, with half her crew killed or wounded, with her guns dismounted, her rudder shattered, completely wrecked and helpless, his ship had been forced out of the line.

As Hallowell had rounded the battery on Bequières, a long and lucky shot struck the *Swiftsure* beneath the water-line exposed for a moment by the heave of a wave. The ship actually had four feet of water in her as she came into action. A heavy detail of her crew was withdrawn from the guns engaged in keeping her afloat under the circumstances by dint of constant labor at the pumps. Nothing daunted by her condition, or by the previous reception of the *Bellerophon*, Hallowell took Darby's vacant place by the side of *L'Orient*.

To his assistance came the *Alexander*. Ball chose to cut in between *L'Orient* and *Le Tonnant*, raking them both as he passed. Then he luffed up on the larboard quarter of Brueys' flagship and, anchored by the head, the only one of the English ships to do so, he joined with the *Orion* and the *Swiftsure* in making a chopping-block of the magnificent three-decker, *Le Peuple Souverain* having been beaten into wood pulp by this time.

And now the English fleet having all come into action except the unfortunate *Culloden*, which the agonized Troubridge and his grief-stricken men were striving vainly to get off the shoal, the battle resolved itself into a trial of strength and endurance. The end was certain. The gallantry and determination of the

French might postpone it for a space, but there was nothing before them but surrender or destruction.

Thirteen heavy ships had been concentrated on the first eight of the French line. With an astonishing and entirely unexplainable supineness the four rear ships of the French fleet lay quietly at their anchors doing absolutely nothing. *L'Heureux*, the next astern of *Le Tonnant*, had indeed engaged the *Majestic* with such of her guns as bore, but *Le Mercure*, *Le Guillaume Tell*, *Le Généreux*, and *Le Timoléon*, which comprised the rear division under Admiral Villeneuve, swung quietly at their anchors, watching the spectacle as if they had no interest in it whatever.

Shortly after eight o'clock a piece of langridge from *Le Spartiate* struck Nelson in the forehead. The jagged, irregular piece of scrap iron cut a great gash, tearing loose a piece of skin as big as a man's hand, which fell down over his eye, completely blinding him. The blood poured over his face. He clapped his hand, to his head and staggered.

"I am killed!" he gasped. "Remember me to my wife."

Macartney caught him in his arms. Turning over the command to Berry, Nelson was carried to the cockpit. The losses of the *Vanguard* had been extremely heavy. Over one hundred of her crew had been killed and wounded. Again and again had her forward gun crews, which had suffered most from *L'Aquilon*, been renewed. The ship's surgeons, with their coats off, their sleeves rolled up, were working like butchers

over the wounded. So soon as they saw the admiral being conveyed to the cockpit they naturally hastened to him, but he peremptorily refused to be treated out of his turn. He suffered horribly, and was confident that he had received his death wound. He sent a last message to his wife, had Berry hail the *Minotaur* and summon her captain, who came aboard the flag.

When the brave Louis bent over the blind and, as he thought, dying admiral in the cockpit and the latter thanked him for the magnificent support he had given him, the scene brought tears to the eyes of the beholders. When it came to his turn and the wound was dressed, the doctors were able to assure the admiral that it was not mortal. Although it was extremely painful and would probably remain so for some time, on account of the shock and a slight fracture of the skull, yet he would soon be able to be about again.

About nine o'clock *L' Orient* was observed to be on fire on her larboard quarter. Hallowell directed his light guns at the burning place in order that her crew might not extinguish the blaze, and in a short time the three-decker was hopelessly aflame. Brueys had been killed. He had been wounded in the cheek and in the leg, but remained at his post until a heavy round shot disembowelled him. Even then he would not be carried below. He died on his own quarter-deck. Captain de Casa Bianca was also desperately wounded. The ship was thereafter fought by Admiral Ganteaume.

At half after nine o'clock the great hulk was a mass of fire. It was evident to every one that she was

doomed. The flames had mounted to the rigging and had caught the masts. They curled around the broad tops in glowing columns, with fiery capitals of marvellous beauty in the blackness of the night. Still her crew fought on. While the decks above them were ablaze, the lower deck guns poured shot and shell into the English, who clung to her like hounds to a boar at bay.

The captains of the *Alexander* and the *Orion* shortly before ten o'clock closed their ports and veered away from the doomed ship. Hallowell, in the *Swiftsure*, who had the advantage of the windward position, hung tenaciously by *L' Orient*, firing to the very last. And now above all the horror of battle the rising moon poured down her soft and brilliant light.

Nelson was told of the imminent danger and clambered from below that he might see it. When he reached the deck of the *Vanguard* he at once asked if any of her boats were still seaworthy, and found one which could be made use of. This he ordered to be made ready under the charge of Macartney, who volunteered for the service, to save such of the crew of *L' Orient* as might be found in the water.

At ten o'clock, with a concussion that seemed to rive the heavens, the great ship blew up. Flaming timbers, spars, bodies were thrown into the air and far and wide in every direction. A rain of fire descended upon the nearest ships. *Le Franklin*, just ahead of *L' Orient*, caught fire in a dozen places. So too did the *Alexander*, the *Swiftsure*, the *Majestic*, and *Le Tonnant*.

The shallow water of the bay heaved upward, as if driven by a tidal wave. Up and down the line the ships swayed to and fro as if drunken with battle. Weakened spars gave way under the strain, masts crashed over the riven sides. Under the influence of the awful concussion from the terrific shock involved in the blowing up of the three-decker, the battle stopped for several moments. Not a gun was fired in the face of so awful a manifestation of the power and horror of war.

From the explosion of *L' Orient* but seventy people were saved by the boats from the English ships; for, like the *Vanguard*, the *Swiftsure* and *Alexander* had also sent boats to the rescue. The complement of *L' Orient* was one thousand men, and thus over nine hundred of them were lost.

Le Spartiate and *L' Aquilon* had struck at nine o'clock. *Le Spartiate* had not a single gun that would bear when she hauled down her flag. The slaughter upon her was something unprecedented. *Le Guerrier*, which had been raked by five ships in succession, had been made a chopping-block of by the *Zealous*, which had anchored off her larboard bow in a position entirely inaccessible to the French liner's guns. The *Zealous*, with a loss of one killed and seven wounded, had reduced the French 74 to a complete and total wreck. Her bows were beaten in, her main-deck ports as far aft as the mainmast were knocked into one gaping hole, her upper works had collapsed, her guns were dismounted, and she was in a sinking condition, with nearly four hundred of her crew dead or dying on her decks.

Le Peuple Souverain struck to the *Alexander* soon after the destruction of the flagship. This left at the head of the French line only *Le Franklin*. Around her the other ships promptly closed. For a time, single handed and alone, she had fought the English fleet. Finally, after she had been dismasted and so crushed as to be without power of resistance, she too struck her flag.

Le Tonnant and the *Majestic* had both been fought to a standstill. Shattered and dismasted, they both drifted out of action. As other of the British ships, the *Theseus*, the *Goliath*, the *Audacious*, and the *Zealous*, bore down upon the five remaining ships of the French line, *L'Heureux* and *Le Mercure* cut their cables after a hot engagement, and in their endeavor to escape drifted ashore.

By this time the English crews were almost dead from the hard work of the long day and the terrible battle of the longer night. The indomitable Ball trying to take the *Alexander* into further action, his first lieutenant begged him to give the men a few moments of rest. They were literally collapsing as they fought the guns. Twenty minutes were allowed them, and in a moment every man was asleep in the midst of the commotion, until they were awakened to go on with the fight once more.

It was long past midnight, quite two in the morning, in fact, when Macartney received permission from Nelson to take the *Vanguard's* boat and board the distant *Tonnant* under a flag, for the purpose of summoning it to surrender.

The battle was over. In the words of Nelson, "It was not a victory, it was a conquest!"

The first act of the English admiral, when the exigencies of the ships permitted it, the next day was to publish the following order: —

"*Vanguard*, off the Mouth of the Nile, 2d August, 1798.

"Almighty God having blessed his Majesty's arms with victory, the admiral intends returning public thanksgiving for the same at two o'clock this day, and he recommends every ship doing the same.

"Horatio Nelson."

CHAPTER XXXVI

"YOUR MAJESTY, I FOUGHT FOR FRANCE!"

THE emotions which filled the heart of Louise de Vaudémont when she was informed by her grandfather that the English fleet had been sighted beyond Bequières Island can with difficulty be imagined. She had no assurance, of course, that her lover had succeeded in his endeavor to find Lord Nelson, yet she had a woman's confidence that he had not failed in his attempt. It was not like him to fail, she thought proudly. He always succeeded. He had even won her, she told herself with a happy wave of feeling. She knew he was there. She felt morally certain that he would be in command of one of the swiftly approaching ships which the passing hours of the afternoon brought presently into her view as she paced the poop-deck of *Le Tonnant* by the old man's side.

She estimated the power of the English fleet by her knowledge of Macartney, and not once had it occurred to her at least, that Nelson would hesitate to join in battle. She was certain that so soon as he could get within range the two fleets would engage. In this conclusion she was assured by her grandfather.

There was none of the fatuousness of Brueys about the marquis. He had not permitted himself for a

moment to suppose, as Brueys had done, that the English would be afraid to attack them. He knew the temper of the English in general and he knew the temper of Nelson in particular. Shrewd observer of men as he was, he had not spent hours in his company without divining something of the heroic purpose of the English seaman. He had no doubt whatever as to the relative efficiency of the two fleets either. Bred in the strictest and sternest school of de Suffren, who was an inimitable disciplinarian, the marquis noted the laxity and disorder, the almost utter ruin of the *morale* of the crews which Republican ideas had produced. Liberty, equality, and fraternity! Republican ideas were very well on shore; they brought nothing but disaster at sea.

Dupetit-Thouars was a man after the old man's heart, and if he had had more time and better material he might have effected something on the ship to which he had been so lately commissioned, but the crew had been completely demoralized by Garron, and there was little improvement which he could bring about in the few days he was allowed full and unhindered sway. He did, however, do something. It is probable that he possessed the best crew of any of the French ships. As he was a man — and he was about to demonstrate it conclusively in the coming battle — of the most amazing vigor and courage, he communicated some of his spirit to his men.

The feelings of the marquis as he saw the English fleet bearing down upon them were somewhat complex.

The triumph of England would mean the discomfiture of Bonaparte and the advancement of the cause of the King. Therefore, from his political point of view, it was to be hoped for and prayed for. At the same time, a man who had fought the red flag fluttering from the mastheads of the nearing ships through sixty years of service could not forget in a moment his ancient enmities. Sometimes the marquis found himself, with a start of surprise, longing to be in command. The appeal of the moment threatened to overbalance the calm, dispassionate judgment of the hour. For instance, he was burning with a desire to give advice. He realized, as perhaps no other in the French fleet, the utter hopelessness of Brueys' position. He knew just what Nelson would do. There was a chance, only a chance, but, such as it was, a possibility, that if Brueys could get under way and could bring his ships to bear upon Nelson's fleet he might crush it before the three rearmost English ships could get into action.

In default of a better confidant he explained all this to Louise as they walked side by side. Louise had shared the old man's life long enough and intimately enough to have learned something of sea fighting from his experience. She realized that the battle would be a fierce and furious one. She herself, her grandfather, and her foster-sister, would be in the midst of it. There would be as much danger to them as to any one, but she never gave a thought to her own peril, nor even to that of the marquis. Her mind was fixed upon the possibility of danger to Macartney. She wondered

upon which of the ships he might be. A tentative question to the marquis had enlightened her somewhat.

"Unless," said the old man, "he has been placed in command of one of the ships, to which his rank and his long experience would entitle him — which is most unlikely, for no admiral would displace a captain on the eve of battle — he will probably be found on the flagship; although possibly his knowledge of the situation might enable him to give better service on the van ship."

All of which was very uncertain and unsatisfactory. He might be on that foremost ship swinging so magnificently into action at the head of the line nearly a mile away. He might be on that leviathan of war carrying the admiral's flag. He might be upon any of the other ships. It was even possible that when *Le Tonnant* found her antagonist Macartney might be in command.

A place had been made for the comtesse and her maid in the cable tiers, but it was not necessary for her to go there during the first part of the battle. With her grandfather, therefore, and Captain Dupetit-Thouars she hung over the rail and watched ship after ship swing into the smoke and flame ahead and open her batteries. She saw the whole marvellous manœuvring of the English fleet as her grandfather pointed it out to her. She alternated in her feelings between admiration, astonishment, apprehension, and terror.

She was a true daughter of France. The King was not altogether France after all. She found herself

torn between two desires. She understood something of the feelings which had actuated her brother Honoré. Sometimes she found herself wishing that the English would be beaten, provided Macartney might come out unharmed. Then she realized what the defeat of this fleet and the isolation of Bonaparte in Egypt might mean to the King. The scene before her was like a magnificent picture—an enthralling, absorbing presentation of the majesty of war. And the setting in which the terrific action took place was so softly beautiful! The sun sank to rest in a blaze of glory that seemed to mock the puny lights of man, though those lights came from the flashes of a thousand cannon. The sky above was studded with brilliant stars as the darkness drew on. Presently the moon rose. The cannonade seemed to kill the wind after a time. All around was peace and calm. But hell itself was mocked in the ships.

The men of *Le Tonnant* stood chattering idly by their guns awaiting the approach of their antagonist. No shot had come from any direction on that ship. None of the horrors of war were apparent, only the glorious pomp and circumstance. Louise had not had enough experience adequately to imagine the conditions on the doomed ships ahead. It was all strange, terrible, thrilling. The diapason of the cannonade beat into her brain; the lights, the flashes of the guns, the stately moving ships, bewildered her. The battle got hold of her, fastened itself upon her. She wanted to do something, strike one blow for France, to fight! And she was but a woman. How those men yonder must

feel! Presently the marquis and Dupetit-Thouars left her to herself. They were discussing the situation.

"*Mon Dieu!*" said the captain, "if I were only in command of those ships!" waving his hand aft toward the rear division. "I should order them to get under way at once! See! The English are doubling on us! We could play the same trick upon them with those unengaged ships! We could overwhelm those three to windward yonder! I should get under way at once!"

"And you would do right," said the marquis.

"If I only dared, I would take out *Le Tonnant* without orders!"

"There will be no need. You at least may count upon an antagonist, but the battle for the present will stop here, I think."

"Yes, yes. Admiral Brueys expected the English would attack his rear and the best ships are aft there."

"A man like Nelson does the unexpected always," said the old man.

"Of course."

"Look yonder!" cried the admiral. "*L'Orient* is engaged! How magnificent is the courage of that 74 to tackle that great three-decker! See, she reels from the shock of *L'Orient's* broadside! God, she will sink alongside! No, no, she holds her own! They fight magnificently, those English! But 'tis a hopeless overmatch. Spring your cable, Dupetit-Thouars!" cried the old man, suddenly, "your forward guns can reach

the English ship! God forgive me!" he said, "I forgot!"

Dupetit-Thouars instantly acted upon the wise suggestion. The stern of *Le Tonnant* was sprung to starboard, and from such guns as bore a fire at long range was poured upon the *Bellerophon* busily engaged with *L'Orient*. The English liner could make no reply. As the smoke of her own guns blew across *Le Tonnant's* decks the admiral was reminded of his granddaughter. He stepped across to where she stood clinging to the rail and staring ahead.

"Louise," he said, "you must go below."

"Not yet, not yet, monsieur," cried the girl. "Let me stay! There is no danger yet."

"See!" cried the marquis, pointing, as the bluff bows of a great ship came looming through the smoke to windward of the *Bellerophon*, her topsails showing faintly white in the flashes of the battle, "yonder is our foeman! Down in the cable tiers at once with you!"

"Let me stay!"

"I cannot!"

"Grandfather!"

"Louise, if you do not obey me at once, I shall have you carried below. This is no place for a woman."

Louise turned away. As she stepped on the ladder leading to the quarter her eye fell on the forms of some of the wretched women of the ship. They were acting as powder-boys, the ship being somewhat short-handed.

"They stay," she protested, "why may not I?"

"You are different," said the marquis, inflexibly.

"Not another word! By heaven, they will open upon us in a moment! Go!"

There was that in the old man's appearance which warned her that it would not be well for her to hesitate longer, so she reluctantly descended the ladder, past the men sweating at the guns in the heat of the summer night as they trained them on the approaching English ship; down through the narrow confines of the main deck, a hurly-burly of shouting, swearing figures toiling at the training tackles in the dim light from the long rows of flickering lanterns; down far below the water-line into the recess where the mighty cables lay, the safest place on the ship, which had been provided for her and Aurore.

Scarcely had she reached it when *Le Tonnant* shook from truck to keelson with the roar of her first broadside, which had been poured upon the *Majestic*. An instant later a more muffled detonation, followed by the crashing of timber and the shrieks of men, told of the return discharge. Thereafter there was no intermission in the dreadful roar of sound.

The woman sat on the damp coils of the cables, one hand clasped upon her breast, as if she would fain tear open her dress to relieve the awful pressure of her beating heart. Imagination, in the darkness, added a thousand terrors and anxieties to her soul. What could have happened? Where was Macartney? What was her grandfather doing? Were the English crushing the ships of the French? The roar of the battle was dying away.

Above her head in the cockpit she could hear the shrieks and groans and prayers of the wounded. Blood trickled down the open scuttle into the cable lockers and fell upon her dress. It was cruel, cruel, to keep her there without sending her word, without letting her know! She would die if she could get no news!

The habit of obedience was strong upon her, as it was upon all the demoiselles of France in that day and age, but at last her anxieties became too much for her. Other women were there above her, doing something, playing a part. She would not remain below any longer! No, under no circumstances! She had been there weeks, months, years! She looked at her watch as she thought and found that it wanted a few minutes to ten o'clock. She had been there nearly two hours! She could stand it no longer!

Bidding the frightened maid remain where she was, Louise rose to her feet and ascended the ladder to the main deck.

What a scene of finished horror met her gaze! As the ship rolled in the gentle swell, water and blood swashing across the deck wetted her feet. Dead men lay piled upon the deck in every direction. Dismounted guns gaped uselessly at the sky through ports which had been battered into vast openings. Here and there a cannon surrounded by a group of half-naked, powder-blackened, blood-stained seamen still venomously spat its fire and destruction at a black, red-lanced something seen dimly through the smoke on the other side.

It was more open and less murky on the deck above, but the same scene of carnage was there. Possibly, since it was lighter there it was more apparent and therefore more appalling. This, this was war! This was what was meant by that which had set her pulses beating when she watched it ignorantly on the ships ahead! Her brain reeled at the sight and the thoughts it brought to her. She would have fainted, but she constrained herself to go on.

Presently she reached the quarter-deck. Lifting her eyes, she saw a frightful sight. A huge division-tub was placed on the deck. Propped up in the loose sand which it contained was the armless figure, ghastly and horrible, of a man! It was Dupetit-Thouars! He was stone dead! She learned afterwards that he had lost first one arm, then the other, and finally a leg; that he had refused to be taken below; and that he had ordered his men to bring up the tub filled with sand, to thrust him in there so that he might direct the battle so long as he lived. He had died in that position. There by his side stood an old man, his head thrown back, his eyes shining, his voice high and shrill with excitement. It was her grandfather directing the battle!

"Give it to them, men!" he shouted, and there was so much power in his appeal that it was distinctly heard over all noise of battle. "We have them beaten! Once more for France! Another broadside! Fire, fire! Steady! The last shot may tell the tale! Strike, strike for France!"

The men manning the quarter-deck guns, crazed with

the mad lust of battle in their veins, screamed frantically as they looked at that white, thin, slender, old figure, sword in hand, by the side of their dead captain. It was the marquis fighting the ship; and magnificently, desperately, did he fight her! Not a mast was left standing. A few feet above the deck the jagged ends of the foremast projected. The mainmast had been cut beneath the hounds. The mizzenmast had been carried away clean. The wreck had fallen in a confused, terrible mass to larboard. Its weight had dragged down the larboard side and lifted the starboard side of *Le Tonnant* so that her bilge was presented to the enemy. There was no time to cut the wreck away. There were no hands to spare from the guns. One-half her crew had been struck down and most of them killed.

In the pile of dead Louise marked here and there a woman's dress; from one feminine head a mass of fair hair rippled in the blood on the deck. Alas, poor women of pleasure, they had bought freedom from a life of sin and shame with death, paid a heavy price for release — perhaps a merciful God might consider it a ransom!

The girl dragged herself up the ladder and went to the side of her grandfather and touched him on the shoulder.

"Louise!" he cried, having forgot everything in the mad lust of battle in which the excitement of the contest possessed him, "we have beaten them! Look yonder!"

"Are you hurt, sir?" asked the woman.

"Hurt? No! I tell you we have won! She is silent! Going out of action! Look! Dismasted! Sinking! Hark! Those are our guns! We still reply! For France, for France, men! Strike on!"

Back of his master, musket in hand, knelt the figure of Brébœuf. Slowly and deliberately, as if he were potting chickens, he was aiming at figures seen dimly in the moonlight and in the flash of the guns upon the English ship. She, too, was dismasted and helpless, but the brave Westcott had fought the *Majestic* superbly.

The relative strength of a French 80 and an English 74 was about as ten to seven, and the most that could be said for the achievement of *Le Tonnant*, in spite of the old man's exultation, was that the battle was drawn. The English were not completely silent, either, for a sullen gun from time to time poured its fire into the French ship. From her quarters, too, a sputtering musketry fire was kept up. It is probable that the English ship might have done more had not Westcott fallen dead upon his own deck, shot by that marksman of marksmen, Brébœuf.

In the excitement of their own fierce battle no one had paid any attention to *L'Orient*, and it was not until the awful crash of her explosion that the marquis called his men from the guns to extinguish the rain of firebrands that were hurled upon the ship. For fifteen or twenty minutes the crew were furiously busy averting this danger and putting out ensuing fires, but so soon as it was over the battle was recommenced. Some of

the men in each ship had taken advantage of the respite to clear away some of the guns encumbered by the wreckage, and the fight began with renewed fury. The marquis literally forgot his granddaughter as he continued to direct the men of *Le Tonnant*. Her first lieutenant had been killed and her second wounded, so there was no one to dispute the command with him had any one been so inclined.

Louise watched him, fascinated, dividing her attention between him and the rest of the warring fleets. She was still wondering where Macartney was. The anxieties, half formed and indefinite, which had been in her heart when the battle began had cleared and were definite and coherent, caused by the horror of the ship at her feet. She was filled with terror for the man she loved.

The fire of the *Majestic* and that of *Le Tonnant* became slower and slower. There was not a gun that could bear on either ship after a time. The two ships had been engaged at half pistol-shot distance for nearly three hours. They were both beaten to a standstill. The men unhurt on *Le Tonnant* were so exhausted that it was with difficulty that they could keep from falling prostrate by the guns among the dead. It was only the voice and example of the indomitable old marquis that kept them up. Finally, at eleven o'clock, that voice was suddenly stopped. A well-aimed musket shot from the English ship struck the old man full in the breast. He pitched downward by the side of the dead body of Dupetit-Thouars in his bran tub. Louise

ran to him and gathered his head in her arms. Brébœuf threw down his musket and leaped to her assistance.

"Go, go!" cried the girl. "To the surgeons—"

"Stay!" feebly murmured the marquis, "'tis useless. No surgeon can do for me now."

"Let him be taken below," said Bauduy, the third lieutenant, now the ranking officer of the ship, who had been apprised of the catastrophe by one of the men.

"No, no," said the old man, "an admiral of France dies best on the quarter-deck of his ship."

"Is there nothing to be done?" entreated Louise.

"Nothing," said the marquis, feebly, "I have fought my—last—battle. Do I grow deaf—as I die—or is—is—"

"The fire has stopped," answered Bauduy.

"And the English ship?"

"Drifted away from us."

"We have beaten her, then?"

"I think so."

"How goes the battle?"

"But badly, I fear."

There was a wild cry from the men forward. Bauduy sprang to the break of the quarter-deck and peered ahead. A man came running aft.

"There are two other English ships bearing down upon us!" he cried.

"Where?" said Bauduy.

"There they come! We cannot meet them!"

"Don't strike — your flag!" said the vice-admiral.

"Never!" answered Bauduy. "Cut the cable!" he shouted, "we'll drift away!"

In the darkness *Le Tonnant* swung down past the rest of the line, past *L'Heureux* and *Le Mercure*, which, fortunately for *Le Tonnant*, took the brunt of the fire of the approaching ships, with which they were soon hotly engaged.

"What does Villeneuve?" asked the marquis, faintly.

"Nothing."

"Curses on him!" cried the old man. "He might have saved — the day — for France."

There was nothing that could be done for the marquis. Even Louise could see that. With anguish in her heart she made him as comfortable as possible. A rolled-up flag pillowed his head. She knelt by his side and laved his brow. He did not suffer much. The shock of the ball in his breast at close range had been terrific. He lay perfectly still, but his mind was as active as ever. From time to time he asked the girl how the battle went. She would have given worlds to have encouraged him with the news of a victory, but it was evident at three o'clock in the morning that all was over. *Le Mercure* and *L'Heureux* had been driven ashore. The three ships not yet engaged, *Le Guillaume Tell*, *Le Généreux*, and *Le Timoléon*, had cut their cables and sought shelter with two frigates in the extreme southern end of the bay. Every other ship in the French fleet except *Le Tonnant* had been taken possession of or destroyed by the English. A silence broken

only by the groans and cries of the wounded on the ships fell over that Homeric scene of battle.

"My child," faltered the old marquis, "I die as becomes a sailor — in action. God forgive me if — at the last moment — I fought against my King! I — I — forgot. Those English — I fought them for — sixty years. Brave Dupetit-Thouars was dead — I took com — mand — against the King! May God forgive me!"

"He will understand, grandfather," sobbed Louise. "I understand."

"'Tis a brave death to die — on the winning ship — yet — I would it had been — under the old flag. Brébœuf!"

The old man crept wearily toward the marquis and kissed his hand.

"Faithful Brébœuf! We owe you much — You will take care of the young comtesse? You will serve her as you did her mother — as you served me?"

"So help me God!" gasped the old servant.

"And Honoré? He — too — fought against — the King. There is left only you — Louise. You will be faithful — my child? You will tell — his Majesty how — it was?"

"Yes, yes," said the girl. "I will tell him everything."

"A Republic!" murmured the marquis. "Who would have believed it possible? Perhaps — they were right. I was too old to learn — You will be faithful, Louise?"

"Yes."

"What will become of you?" said the old man, tenderly. "If only that Englishman — you love him?"

"Yes," said Louise, gravely.

"That is right. Death in the old heart — love in the young. Poor girl! Pray God he has escaped — this battle!"

"There's a boat alongside with a white flag, Lieutenant Bauduy," said one of the seamen, coming forward at the moment, "an officer who says he comes from Admiral Nelson."

"Let him come aboard," answered Bauduy, stepping forward to meet him.

"Monsieur," cried a voice out of the darkness as the English officer stepped through the gangway, "Admiral Nelson wishes to know if your ship has struck?"

"She has not, sir!"

"Do you intend to give her up?"

"Why, as to that — " hesitated the young officer.

"Sir," said Macartney, not waiting for his answer, "are Vice-admiral de Vaudémont and his granddaughter on board of you by any chance?"

"They are, sir."

"Where are they? Are they — "

"They are yonder."

"May I go to them? I am Captain Macartney, your former prisoner. You remember?"

"You may go."

In an instant Macartney made his way to the little

group on the quarter-deck. With a low cry of joy Louise recognized him.

"You here?" she said. "Alive! Unharmed! Thank God!"

"Who is that?" asked the marquis, faintly.

"Captain Macartney," whispered the girl.

"Why came he here? For what purpose? Have we struck?"

"I came to seek you, to seek your granddaughter," said Macartney, kneeling by his side. "Are you hurt, sir? Is it serious?"

"I have fought my last battle, lad. Ask yon English ship — if it were a good one."

"'Twas a terrible one, monsieur, but it has killed you."

"'Tis nothing. I wish to go. I have outlived my age. I am glad you are come, monsieur. You love my granddaughter — I had other views for her — but the love of an honest sailor is good — You will guard over her — watch over her — be tender with her?"

"With my life!" answered Macartney.

"I believe you — God bless you both — You will be married at once — You must find a priest of the old religion. Brébœuf — Louise —" he cried suddenly, his voice growing astonishingly strong. "Lift me up!" he said.

It was four o'clock in the morning. The dawn already laced the east with its pale grayness. The light of breaking day fell upon the face of the old man. He stared across the decks and out to sea as if he were

gazing upon a vision. To his unresponsive ear at that moment came the roar of the guns of some far ship reopening battle.

"They fight still," he murmured, "we are not beaten! Lift me — up — the flag!"

He stopped again. They gathered around him awe-struck and silent.

"Grandfather," said the girl, "speak to me!"

But he was speaking to some one not of this earth.

"De Suffren," he said, "the English are there! Strike hard!"

The blood gushed from his lips, his head sank forward on his breast. By a supreme effort he raised it again.

"Your Majesty," he said, struggling until he disengaged his hand from Brébœuf. Lifting his arm high in the growing light, he cried: —

"Your Majesty, I fought for — France!"

With a low cry Brébœuf laid the old man gently back upon the deck he had immortalized by his valor. The woman buried her head in her arms and Macartney before all lifted her tenderly and clasped her to his breast in his strong and tender arms.

There was silence for a little space, when an interruption came. The survivors among the crew had gathered aft staring at the Irishman. In the dawning light some of them recognized him. They were overwrought with the strain of battle. They remembered the story of Garron's treachery, and it flashed into their minds that this man was perhaps responsible for their

disaster. He had told Nelson where they were. He had brought destruction upon them. Growling and muttering ran through the group of men. Their higher officers were gone, with many of lower rank. There was no one to control them.

Macartney instantly realized that something was about to happen. He had that peculiar feeling for danger which is a part of the equipment of a great captain. He was unarmed save for his sword. His boat's crew were at the gangway alongside. He would summon them. Putting Louise behind him, he stepped forward, only to be met by a rush of men toward him. They clustered around him with such arms as they could seize, threatening and menacing.

"You're the cause of it!" cried one burly boatswain's mate. "You brought the English upon us with that cursed carrion, Garron! Kill him, kill him, men!"

"On deck, you Vanguards!" shouted Macartney at the top of his voice, seeing how serious was the state of affairs. At the same time he whipped out his sword and made a lunge at the nearest man. The lunge was partially parried, and the man gave back, but at least the point of the weapon touched him. With a howl of rage he lifted his own cutlass and sprang forward.

"Ahoy, Vanguarders! Bear a hand, for God's sake!" cried Macartney.

Unless some diversion were made, it would be too late. As he called, Louise, frantic with terror, threw

herself upon his breast. Seeking to do him service, she embarrassed him. He drew her aside with his left arm, and with his right held off the mob. But it would have gone hard with him had it not been for Brébœuf. He, too, sprang forward, and as the Frenchmen came rushing at the Irishman he threw himself with outstretched arms upon the sword points, gathering them like von Winkelried into his mighty breast.

Such was the impetus of the Breton's leap that he fairly carried all before him. The men fell back in a confused heap cursing and swearing. Before they could recover themselves the heavily armed crew of the cutter had reached the deck, and leaping upon the backs of the mob silenced them. They made short work in getting to the side of their officer. They were few in number compared to the French, and it might have resulted seriously had not the *Theseus* and the *Audacious* at that moment dropped down, one athwart the hawse, the other ranging alongside the *Tonnant*, demanding her surrender.

There was nothing to do but to obey. The French sailors were held in check by the *Vanguard's* men until a prize crew from the *Theseus* had come aboard and secured them.

Louise and Macartney had instantly turned their attention to Brébœuf. He had been pierced by a dozen blades. So soon as he fell he had endeavored to drag himself toward the marquis. Macartney stared at him, not understanding his meaning. The woman was quicker.

"He wants to lie there," she said.

With his own hands, assisted by some of his seamen, Macartney lifted the gigantic Breton and laid him at the feet of the marquis. The old sailor said nothing. Perhaps he had not the power, perhaps he had. He only took the hand of Louise in one of his great paws, lifted it to his lips, touched it tenderly, laid it down, stretched out his right hand, laid it upon the feet of the marquis, smiled at them, and closed his eyes.

Brébœuf was a silent man, and he died as he had lived, with no unnecessary words.

L'ENVOI

THEY buried the marquis wrapped in the ancient lilied flag of royal France from the deck of the battered *Tonnant*, Nelson rising from his sick bed to do honor to the gallant sailor and gentleman. And as the body slipped into the waters of the bay, the shattered ships of the English fleet with half-masted flags thundered out a vice-admiral's salute. Following him on his last journey were launched the remains of the faithful Brébœuf.

In the cabin of the *Vanguard*, a few days after, Louise and Macartney were married, Admiral Nelson himself giving away the bride. They had found a prisoner on one of the French vessels, a faithful priest, whom one of the captains of the French liners had brought with him, for he was a man who had stopped following the precepts of the Republic when it abolished God. As Louise and Macartney were both of the Roman Church there was no obstacle to their marriage.

Nelson ordered Macartney to *La Mutine* with despatches for England, his own gallantry being especially mentioned in them. With him Sir Robert took his wife and the faithful Aurore. The *Leander*, carrying Captain Berry with duplicate despatches, had preceded

La Mutine, but had been captured by *Le Généreux*, one of the two ships-of-the-line which under Admiral Villeneuve had escaped from the disaster at Aboukir.

Of thirteen ships-of-the-line and four frigates the French had lost eleven capital ships and two frigates. It is believed that none of the four ships that escaped would have got away had Nelson not been wounded and thus unfitted for direction. They were captured later, anyway, and none of them ever got back to France.

Nelson, although he blamed no one, was greatly disappointed at even the temporary escape of Villeneuve's two ships. As he had said years before, commenting on the satisfaction of an old fashioned and unambitious commander (Hotham) who had not made the most of a victory although he congratulated himself upon having done very well as it was, "Even had ten ships been taken and the eleventh escaped, we being able to get at her, I should never consider it well done!"

Many men know how to win battles, it has been pithily observed; few know how to use victories. Nelson could do both.

Of the eleven French liners, five were burned, namely, the ill-fated *L'Orient*, *Le Timoléon*, *L'Heureux*, *Le Mercure*, and the unhappy *Le Guerrier;* of the two frigates, one was sunk and one burned. The remaining six ships-of-the-line were patched up and taken to Gibraltar and England.

The number killed, wounded, and missing on the French fleet was never accurately determined. Esti-

mates range from thirty-five hundred to five thousand. On the ships engaged, all the French admirals and captains but one captain were killed or wounded. Nor did the English come off scathless. The *Goliath*, the *Orion*, the *Vanguard*, the *Minotaur*, and above all the *Bellerophon* and the *Majestic*, were terribly cut up, losing many spars; the last two were completely dismasted, and nearly two hundred men were killed or wounded on each ship. The total English loss in men was eight hundred and ninety-five — not a great price to pay for the most complete victory in the most magnificent battle ever fought on the sea!

On receipt of this glorious news which Macartney delivered to the King on the 2d of October, he was advanced to the peerage under the title of Lord Macartney by his grateful monarch. Nelson was made Baron Nelson of Burnham-Thorpe and the Nile, with a pension of ten thousand pounds, a very inadequate reward for his consummate strategy, brilliant tactics, and magnificent fighting.

The French dream of an Empire in the East was shattered to pieces by the thunder of the English guns. Three weeks later a courier toiled up to the headquarters of Bonaparte, then on an expedition to the southward, and told him the crushing, the fatal news.

"This will oblige us to do greater things than we intended," he said to Kléber, preserving his composure and his courage in spite of the death-blow to his hopes. "We must die in this country or get out of it as great as the ancients!"

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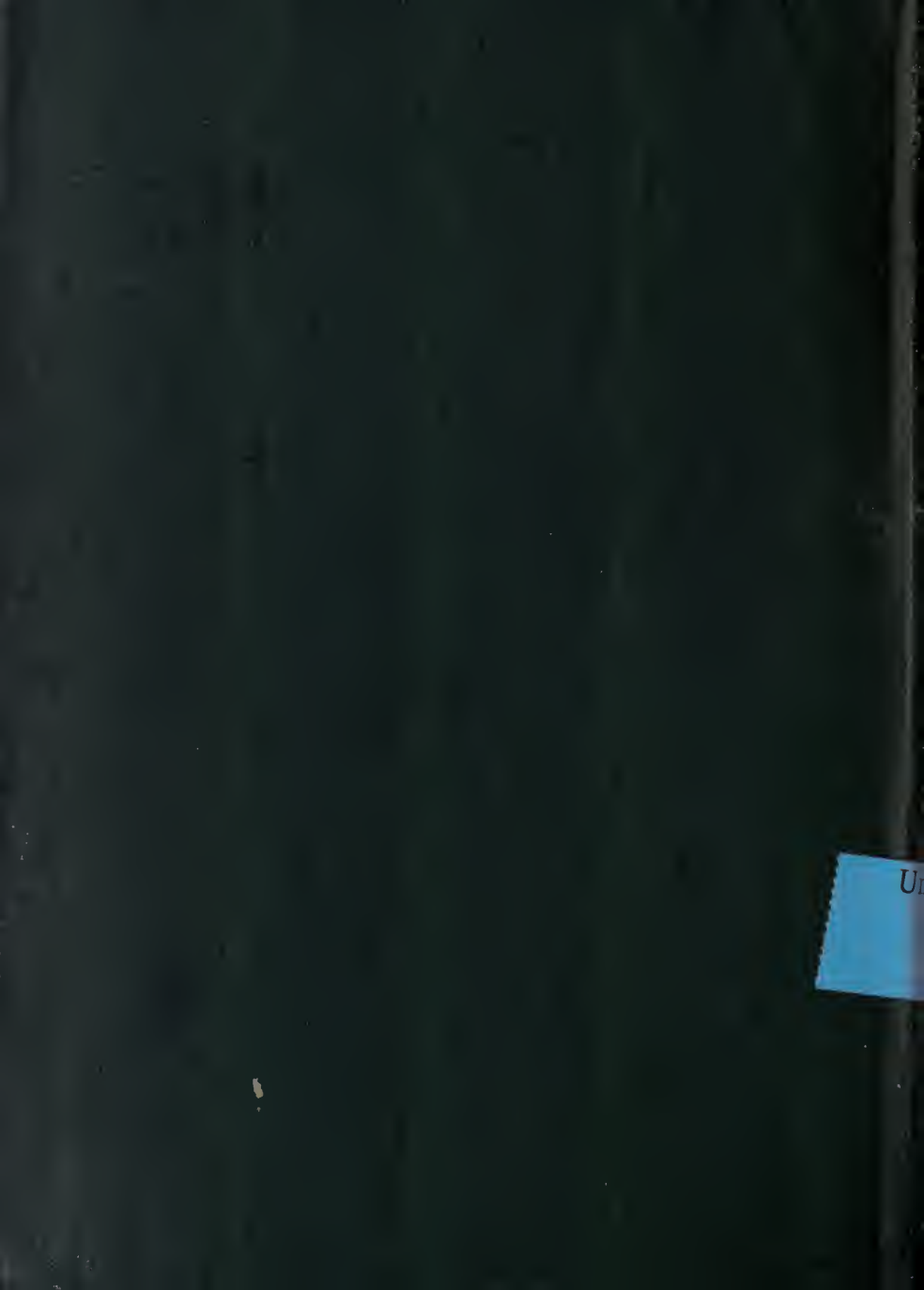
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